



hind y^e scenes sit mighty we
are we known nor will we be
e world and we exchanging thus
ile we find chat for y^e they work
e see that lady in y^e mask.
eel tell ye what she comes to ask
an unconscionable task
now her lover fast to bind
her selfe false as y^e faithles
her brings her swi^{te} flean
golden fetters lock and key
as a sing our thoughts does
only a tongue as other females
thinking our notions too ierune
Some take their aime at madam H. avoid you rowt of noisy foals
Some bring hard queries which we crack
and throw the gazing world y^e kernels back
E heres honest tarr who would his crown afford
were he paid off ere he returns I. n^other lost wretches w^hither
to know what he must ask in vain
when we shall beat y^e french a deppan
F euclid where art! tho' twas bes^o square
thou have thy c^o
but art is long and thou n^o
nor Rome was built nor athenis
G we know s^t but too well your wrong embrace
Some powrfull fashon right or L these dainty nitts j must not loose
or statue and dye without a place
H. avoid you rowt of noisy foals rules
once more you are not in our few
coils we but please y^e feared
which send from far we could M all englands rarities are
by guilt or by unhappy loue
what ned you perish or despair
you'd have aid an angel shows N with beak and talons j n^ose
quers quickly understood
only asks dye thank his coffe
yet woud croud in the dust by th^o
or woud heed take our letters
these dainty nitts j must not loose
nor burn my paws b your leade
if those that put em there
thas you notj that rowt
how sweet is interlopers
M all englands rarities are
from un known earths
thousands agree in such ag
or else a moments work wou
N with beak and talons j n^ose
those cuckoes that mu
and if mimerv a yea
my anhent gift in j
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only asks dy^e thank his coffe^{er} and if mimerv a yea^r
yet woud croud in the dust by th^e in no more
or woud heed take our letters
these dainty n^uts j must not lose dear p^ug
nor burn my paws b your lea^{ve}
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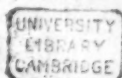
London Printed For John Dunton at a ... e

In. D. 32

T H E
HISTORY
O F T H E
Athenian Society,

For the Resolving all
Nice and Curious **QUESTIONS.**

B Y A
GENTLEMAN,
W H O G O T
Secret Intelligence
Of their Whole Proceedings.



To which are prefix'd

Several P O E M S,
W R I T T E N B Y
Mr. Tate, Mr. Mottaux, Mr. Richardson, and others.

*Felix qui Potuit Rerum cognoscere causas. Virg.
Nam nihil egregius quàm res, est cernere apertas.
Ab dubiis ————— Lucret. lib. 4.*

Ανάγκη τὰς ἐπινοίας περὶ δὲ τῶν συμβαλῶσαι. Isocrates.

L O N D O N :

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The EPISTLE DEDICATORY, To the Gentlemen of the ATHENIAN SOCIETY.

Gentlemen,

EVER since my *First Thoughts* of writing this *History*, I have frequently consider'd whom I should select, as a fit *Patron* of my Endeavors this way; but these Considerations still concluded, that you, who on the *firm Foundation* of your own Excellence, have establish'd your selves in the Esteem of the more solid part of Mankind, without the *Auxiliary Support* of any great Man's Assistance; that *You* who had no *Richelieu* to cherish your first Essays, or guard your *Rising Merit*, were ablest to Patronize that, which chiefly aim'd at giving the World a Draught, in little, of what it ow'd to your *Incomparable Performances*. If it were not, that most Writers have a sordid present Gain in View, when they design a *Dedication*, I am confident, we should see few *Noblemens Names* at the beginning of their Works, since it must be confess'd, 'twould be more for the Advantage of their Reputation, to chuse one another for Patrons; a Writer being better qualified to defend that, which he has once espous'd, with his *Pen*, than any Great man, with his empty *Name*, or a long *Catalogue of Titles*. At least I am sure, no man will think my Choice improper, when he shall consider, how well able you are to *protect my Failings* with your *Invincible Pens*, against all those, who shall hereafter attaque them. Nor will the *Defect* of what I have writ, make me at all despair of your favourable Reception, since every Action ought to receive its Value from the *Intention*, not the *awkward manner* of Performance. My *Will* design'd your Honor, tho' my *Penn* has not come up to the Greatness of my *Aim*. I was no sooner convinced by what you published, of the Possibility of carrying on so *Noble an Undertaking*, but I resolv'd to attempt this *History*, which I hop'd to perfect without the knowledge of any of your *Learned Society*, being sensible that your *abounding Modesty* would endeavour to stifle that, which might bear the least resemblance of a *Panegyris*, in the Eye of even the *Envious*; but by the want of Caution in some concern'd in the publishing it, I found, before the last sheet was printed, one of your *Society* had Intelligence of it, whose *Letter* may convince the World, that this Fear of mine was not without *Just Ground*. But I will not pretend wholly to justify my self, for publishing this *History* without your Leave, since a thing of this nature, indeed, merited better Helps than I had to the compiling of it, and none were capable of affording them effectually but your selves; yet it was an Error of the *better side*, a *Trespass* caus'd by a too unconsidering *Esteem*, and *Value* for your *Noble Undertaking*, and no less *Performances*, which have not only engag'd me in this Affair, but alwaies to be, as I must here subscribe my self;



Gentlemen,

Your Admirer, and Humble Servant,
R. L.

To the Athenian Society.

THE Warmth your Beams produc'd you must excuse;
Your Commendation first inspir'd my Muse:
Your friendly Praise supports her feeble Wing;
You both invite, and teach her how to sing.

And, while by Art your charming Numbers move,
Her Wood-wild Notes instruct her to improve.
Censure, in this Attempt, can only say,
That I my Debt of Thanks too poorly pay;
That from your Bounty I my Tribute raise,
And but return the Product of your Praise.
Tut Mortals thus to Sacred Altars go
With Presents which the Gods did first bestow.
We treat them from the Stores which they dispense
Not to Requite, but shew our grateful Sense.
To sing your Toils let abler Bards aspire,
While I at distance silently admire,
How much oblig'd your Country is to you,
If Wit, and Learning, here, those Charms renew,
That Art's Admirers once to Athens drew.
If thither Conqu'ring Rome for Knowledge sought,
What Miracles have you for Britain wrought!
Who Athens home to us at your own Charge have brought!
Aspiring Lewis's self must yield to you,
In that sole Praise which he can call his Due:
Translated Learning France too dearly buys,
Which cheaply your Compendious Book supplies.

This Diff'rence too your Preference secures,
His Aim was Glory, Publick Good was Yours.
For while you move the various Orbs of Wit,
Conceal'd the great Intelligences sit.

N. Tate.

Attica Societati.

DOcta cohors, Musis & Apolline iara secundis,
Per quam Cecropiis vita resurgit avis,
Cujus luce novam nostra decus additur Urbi,
Visit, & arctos mitior aura plagas,
Eja age naturæ penetralia pande lantis,
Invitam excutens, quæ licet usq; Deam.
Fortia languenti præbe medicamina mundo,
Phœbeumq; tuo lumine redde diem.
Lux divina Sophi Tiranla lumina vincit,
Et penetrat terras, & super astra volat.
Quin pergis victuram in sæcula promere chartam,
Quin Sophiæ sequeris liberioris iter?
Ingens restat adhuc messis, novus ordo laborum:
Auxillatrices sperat Apollo manus.
Barbariem, moreq; feros manus Attica ademit,
Nec subigenda tibi monstra minoræ manent.

P. Motteux.

The same in English.

To the Athenian Society.

Sons of the Muses, at whose welcome Birth
Auspicious Phoebus cheer'd the drooping Earth,
By whom once more old Larned Athens liv'd;
Our great Metropolis new Fame receives,
And a more gentle Air our Northern Climes revives,
Go on, descend to Nature's deepest Cell,
The gloomy Night that veils the dismal Deep dispel.
Help a whole World which doth your Aid implore,
And seat'ring Beams of Light our golden days restore.
Learning's divinest Rays the Sun's rays, and
And pierce the Globe, and range the loftiest Skie.
In never-dying Lines your task renew,
Through Learning's boundless Sea your course pursue,
Vast undiscover'd Regions make for you.
The mighty Work much Art, much Toil demands,
And even Apollo wants assisting Hands.
In dismal Shades the ancient World did live,
Till Athens Wisdom did its Light display;
Athens once more must change our Darkness into Day.

P. Motteux.

To the Athenian Society.

ERe Science was, or Learning had a Name,
Dilated Memory recorded Fame:
Twice long before Forgetfulness was born,
Or Wit could find out Ignorance to scorn:
When Men could back Six hundred years relate,
And still pursu'd their very distant Fate.
Deeds sooner far than Men did die,
And long-protracted Life forgot Mortality;
Wide as the Heavens their Thoughts did rove
To Actions great as the extensive Soul.
Letters and Books the Helps We use
To keep expiring Sense alive,
Needless to Them, who could at once possess,
In their unbounded Knowledge all was known;
Who had with Time their Race begun,
And still liv'd on as if they'd Time itself survive.
Nature bestow'd her youthful Store so well,
That none could want, and therefore none excel,
And so impartially adorn'd the Mind,
That equal Knowledge did inform Mankind.

Thus when our Fathers (teacht with Guilt)
That huge stupendous Scaff-cake built,
We mock indeed the fruitless Enterprise,
Successful Actions never pass for Wise:
But was the Dreadful Pile in being, 'twould show
To what degree that untaught Age did know
Who Nature's Polze unqually divide,
And turn'd the Globe into a Piramide,
While Heaven seem'd more to apprehend it, than deride.

Strange uncouth Dialects from Heaven succed,
And Universal Clouds of Jargon spread:
Confusions here in horrid Squadrons set;
And here King Ignorance began his Reign;
Old Knowledge hither bore Imperial Sway,
But found a strange, a shuffling Decey:
And tho' the Old Researcher striv'd to keep the Throne,
The Tyrant Ignorance wax'd as he grew;
Two thousand years the Tyrant had prevail'd,
And on his Darling Stochastic Crown extol'd;
While the old drooping Monarch saw his Fate,
But wanted Power to jump his vain's Death.
Two Sons he had, Tokens of Angelic Birth,
That promis'd fair, to deliver the Earth
Wisdom, and Learning, Twins of shining Hope,
That sink his Plur, and all his Conjectures
Of all his numerous Progeny, they alone
Remain the Heirs of his declining Throne;
The rest opposing his approaching Fate,
Sink in the Ruins of their Father's State,
But these the Darlings of the Parent Age,
He timely rescued from the Tyrant's Rage;

For these he call'd; for these to Heaven he pray'd,
To Lachum one, and one to Greece convey'd,
Inspir'd by Infants, with a mutual Rage,
Eternal Wars with Ignorance they wage;
From Athens one, and one from Rome is sent;
The gloomy World with their own Genial Fire;
So Form did Chaos, light, the Dark expel,
As Athens Rome, and Rome the World excell:
The Usurping Troops, by their own Guilt subdu'd,
Fled from the approaching dawn, while none pursu'd.
The enlighten'd world new Altars gladly raise,
And form new Triumphs to the Victors' Praise.
Wisdom, and Learning, aged with Renown,
Enjoy unenvy'd an Eternal Crown;
Their Empire to the World's Extremes extend;
And Viceroy to remote Kingdoms send,
Their faithful Agents through the world disperse,
And these we sing in our Immortal Verse;
These now we sing, and willing Trophies raise,
To their just Valor, and their Masters' Praise.

D. F.

To the Athenian Society.

WHen the Mysterious Nothing first was hurl'd
Into a Chaos, thence into a World,
By that great Fiat, (greater much by far
Than the strict Bounds of ancient Maxims were,
Which said, From Nothing Nothing can appear.)
Methinks in that great Work, that mighty Change,
I saw the Immaterial Beings range,
And crowd towards the Sight, as Mortals gaze
At some unknown prodigious Comets blaze;
But when they saw the sweet, the lovely Face,
And curious Harmony the Wonder grace,
Their Admiration lost it self in Praise.
Thus meaneer We, whose low and humble Birth
Derives its Haif at least from Native Earth,
When first the spreading Fame, the Rumour ran,
That Athens had another World begun,
And clear'd the gloomy Shades of Ignorance,
And form'd new Sparkling Orbs—
This span employ'd each Tongue; all Ears and Eyes
Were full of Athens, and the Enterprize.
But when the searching Age began to find
The greater Aim, the Good that was design'd,
Chang'd into All, and cultivat Mankind;
The deep Amusement yav'd, and in its room
Deserv'd Encomium's crowd, and bring their Offerings home.

D. T.

To the Athenian Society.

SOON as our letter'd Souls from Time are free,
All things in Heaven, just as they are we see:
No dark Conjecture, no obscure Suppose
Confounds the knowledge of each hidden Cause;
But cast Nature's beauteous Form appears
Disrob'd of the thick Veil, which here she wears,
The Chain of Causes, and their Order shins,
And clearly shew, they're fram'd by Heav'n's Divine.
To Great Unknown, this You have arriv'd at Now:
And tho' coy Nature flies our searching View,
Whilst clouded Reason's coop'd within this Cage,
Yet you have thus sens'd this happy Age;
Whate'er the searching Study of the Wife
In things divine, and natural yet have found,
Whate'er from your own Observations rise,
From your sublime Retreat you scatter all around.
The MAN, who dead in Ignorance lay,
Now Speaks, and Think, reviv'd by your bright Day.
Desert, they had a little Promethean Flame;
Till you inform'd their Souls with the Celestial Flame;
Go on — Learning, and solid Truth advance,
They're Noble Subjects, for such Worth Praise:
Let your Opposers Tossing Jells pursue,
They write for MINUTES, but for AGES You.

Charles Richardson.

THE HISTORY

OF THE

Athenian Society

I AM sensible, that the more *Judicious* and *Learned* may, with a great deal of Reason, condemn me, as guilty of an unpardonable *Rashness*, in attempting a *Province*, so extremely above my Abilities, as the writing the History of a *Society*, whose Learning and Wit have justly made so considerable a figure in the World: yet I must, with Vanity enough, own, that the *Difficulties* of the *Undertaking* has borne me up so far above any Apprehensions, that (like a *Soldier*, who resolves on some brave Action) I cast off all thoughts of those obstacles, which might frighten a cooler *Considerer*. And since 'tis confess'd, that to aim at *Noble Ends* is enough to merit Applause, I had rather undergo the Severity of the Criticks (who, I have reason to think, will not be so favourable, as to forgive the Faults of the Performance for the Greatness of the Design) than lose the Glory of having first offer'd at it. I will agree with them, that it is to be wish'd, that the Great *SPRAT* would oblige the Age with a *Second Best History* of the *Second Best Institution*, for the promotion of Learning, and removing that *Epidemic Ignorance*, which exercises so incredible a Tyranny over the more numerous part of Mankind: From such a *Pew* the World might expect Satisfaction, and the *Athenian Society* *Fulfil*; the Charms of his *Style* would engage all to read, and his Wit and variety of Learning give them proportionable *Ideas* of those Excellencies he would commend to them: And indeed, none but *He* (whose Thoughts are so true and fine, and whose Language so full, and *clearly* expresses his *Conceptions*) or a whole *SOCIETY* learned as themselves, can be thought capable of acquitting so *glorious* a *Task*, with that *Strength*, and *Perfection* it deserves.

This Consideration would not a little discourage me, if I had not *Two* to obviate the Difficulties it brings: That great part of this Book shall be drawn from the incomparable Works of this *SOCIETY*, who are, indeed, their own Historians, and most worthy to be so: for, their whole design is not only to improve *KNOWLEDGE* in *DIVINITY*, and *PHILOSOPHY* in all their parts, as well as *Philology* in all its Latitude, but also to commend this Improvement

to the Publick, in the best method, that can be found out for *Instruction*; which is or ought to be the End of every *Writer*, unless he aim rather at *Amusement*, than *Information*.

If the *World* would be so favourable, as to admit of what I have said for an *Excuse*, I hope the Gentlemen that compose this *SOCIETY*, will pardon my boldness in presuming to give an account of such an *Undertaking*, who am not so ill acquainted in it, and have not the Happiness of being acquainted with one *Member* of it, whom I shall here advance, *pro* as an evidence of their Design, and the great *Value* I set upon their *Performances*, which are sufficient to convince those (among a *small* number I my self was at first) who were surpris'd with the seeming *Impossibility* of the *Task*, that notwithstanding it was so difficult, yet they have fully come up to what they first pretended to.

The *Design* as well as *Perfection*, seems so extraordinary, that when I reflect on it, I often admire, that the general, nay, universal Advantage it brings, should never have inspir'd any one to have thoughts of it before now; till I consider, that the Good of Mankind was not the aim of the *Greek Philosophers*, so much as their own *Personal Glory*, and *Pride*, which they built on their own *Knowledge* more than the rest of the World, who had not the Leisure and Abilities to spend their whole Life in Disquisitions of *Disputable Notions*; and to maintain this, 'twas necessary for them not to communicate Learning to any but their immediate Hearers, who by word of Mouth were to deliver it to their Successors in the Schools. This made all their *Doctrines* confin'd to their *Language*, their *Prose*, and *Poetry*.

Some of them were so fearful of having their Sentiments known, that they would all their *Notions* up to *Mythology*, so hard to be understood by any, but their own scholars, as those *Chemical* *Tracts* we have now, which treat of the great *Hermetic* *Work*: This was the cause of the different Representations of the *Philosophy* of *Pythagoras* in particular; and I think is not excus'd by the Learned, but that most (if not all) of those *Abstrudities*, which are attributed to him, *pro*

proceed only from the uncertain Guesſes of his Oppoſers, and Enemies, who were never admitted into his School, or had a true knowledge of his Opinions; though perhaps the *Pythagoreans* themſelves did much contribute (notwithſtanding their great veneration for his Memory) by their Ignorance, to the Ignominy of their Maſter, for they learned chiefly by Tradition, to which we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that every Succeſſor, in their School, (who was an Arbitrary Diſpenſer of theſe Myſteries) added, at leaſt by way of Comment, which, in a Generation or two, incorporated with it, and all paſt for his.

If we paſs from *Greece* to *Rome*, though *Politeness* and *Learning* diffuſ'd themſelves into a larger compaſs there, yet their principal Studies were *Oratory*, and the *Art of War*, on which all the Preferments of that Common-wealth turn'd; for, as for *Philosophy*, it was built upon the *Greek* bottom, and *Cicero* was the firſt that brought the *Roman* Language acquainted with it: Both before and after him, they that were that way inclin'd went to *Athens*, then the only Univerſity (if I may call it ſo) of *Europe*, or had Maſters from *Greece*, as *Plutarch*, and his Nephew *Seneca*, and *Apollonius*, may witneſs, who were all three Tutors to Emperors, and all three *Greeks*, beſides many others which I omit. The Vanity, and great Value theſe Philoſophers, that were ſent for to inſtruct the *Romans*, ſet upon themſelves, ſatisfies me, that I have no great cauſe to wonder, that in *Rome* this Project was never thought of, ſince the *Learned*, whole Province this muſt have been, would have loſt that Eſteem they then poſſeſſ'd, by making what they knew common to as many as were capable and willing to underſtand them; whereas their ſingularity in Knowledge gave them Privilege to the higheſt Inſolence: For, when the above-mentioned *Apollonius* was ſent for by the Emperor *Antoninus Pius*, from *Chalcedon* to *Rome*, to read *Philosophy* to his adopted Son *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (ſurnam'd *The Philoſopher*) after his arrival at that City, never went to wait on the Emperor, and being ſent for by him, return'd this Answer; that *It was not fit, the Maſter ſhould attend the Scholar, but the Scholar the Maſter*: This Pride of his was ſo temperately born by that generous Prince, (in that more a Philoſopher than *Apollonius*) that he only ſmil'd, and ſaid to his Servants, *Does he then think it farther from his Lodging to my Palace, than from Chalcedon to Rome?*

From hence is evident what Honour was paid them (by the higheſt Powers on Earth) for the Opinion of their Knowledge, and alſo what Satisfaction, and Pride they took in it: So that it is not ſtrange, that they ſhould perſwade it as neceſſary to their Followers, and by conſequence deprive them of all Thoughts of making Learning more common. But, that a Project of this nature would have been very grateful to the Ro-

mans, I think, is maniſeſt by the general Inclination of their Youth to Learning, of whom ſuch vaſt numbers flock'd to hear *Carnades* during his ſtay in that City, (when he was ſent Ambaſſador from the *Athenians*) that *Marcus Cato* made a Speech againſt him in the Senate, (to whom his Embaſſy was already in ſome ſuſpicion) and told them, That conſidering the whole Youth of *Rome* were ſuch Admirers of him, it were an eaſie matter for him to perſwade them to any thing. This diſcovers ſo great a deſire of Knowledge in them, that, I am confident, whoever ſhould have ſet ſuch a Deſign on foot there, would have been exalted among their Gods, and had divine and immortal Honour paid to his Memory.

It is leſs to be wonder'd, that the Churchmen, who at firſt took up the *Platonick* Principles, to engage in the Controverſial War, with the Heathens, did not promote any thing like the Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe, ſince they were too much employ'd in Diſputes, on the old Foundation, to think of any new Progreſs in Learning; and after they had with ſucceſs managed this *Philosophy* of *Plato*, to the Downfal of Idolatry, their Tribes began to employ it againſt one-another, till their Conteſts, as well as Learning, found a Period in that Inundation of *Barbarity*, which ſwallowed both them, and the *Roman Empire* up together. After an Age of univerſal Ignorance, the Clergy again put themſelves upon Learning, at leaſt aſſumed the Name of it; but it is not to be wonder'd, that they, who, out of the ill-underſtood Work of *Ariſtotle*, compoſed an abſurd Body of *Philosophy*, kept up the unreaſonable Humour of confining the Sciences within ſuch narrow Bounds, that many an Age ſcarce produc'd one Layman, that knew any thing of Letters, becauſe as it had gain'd the Philoſophers Veneration, ſo it would add to that which the bigotted World already paid to their Character, for by this means the Clergy became undeniable Oracles in both divine, and prophane Knowledge.

The School-mens Heads were too much taken up with *Subtilties*, and *Notions*, deduc'd from theſe Principles (they too being all of the Clergy) to deviſe any means of making the reſt of men wiſer than before.

But that which gave me the greateſt cauſe of wonder, was, that ſince the benefit of Printing, Books, and conſequently Learning, grew more general, and with that an univerſal Inclination of moſt men to ſpread it ſtill farther, that nothing of this nature ſhould by none of the Great men, and Virtuofos of our own, or foreign Nations be found out, before about a year ſince.

I am not ignorant that there is a Book called *Sphinx Theologico-Philosophica*, that bears ſome reſemblance to the *Athenian Mercury*, but then it differs ſo much when you come to peruſe it, that if it had not been to obviate ſome mens unreaſonable Fancies, I would not have nam'd it; for, there the Au-
thor

both the Publick, and Private, to consider a little of that which the Mind, the nobler part of Mankind, will reap from it, that being its chief aim, and design, the others but accidental.

What an improvement this will be to Learning, I presume, none, that will give themselves leisure to reflect, can be insensible of; for a diffusing Knowledge, among all that Heaven has made capable, must certainly be the occasion of more Discoveries, in Truth, and Nature, because the number of the Learned will be encreased; of the Learned, I say; for, I cannot see any reason why Languages should be thought so necessary an Ingredient for the composing a Scholar, if it were not for the opening the Secrets that are locked up in them; which Prison this *Noble Society's* Undertaking will in time free 'em from; for, indeed 'tis very hard, that those whose Pockets could not arrive to better Education, and yet are blest with abler Brains than many who spend their time in Books, should be hindered from those advantages they could so well make use of. The *French* have remov'd in some measure this Obstacle, and made all Authors familiar to every one, that can but read and understand their own Mother-tongue, by translating all Books of any value into their own Language. 'Tis true, we have imitated them a little in that way, but under a different Capacity; for here there are a sort of little Ignorant Foreigners, who understand neither our Tongue, nor that from whence they translate, employed by the Booksellers on this difficult Task, because they murder a noble Author cheaper, than a Man of Parts will do him Justice, and like a *Spaniard* will live upon a Glove of Garlick, and work hard for what will but suffice to buy 'em a great Coat to keep 'em from the Cold: This is the case, we have few good Translations. Whereas the *French* are more accurate, because they who give themselves to Undertakings of that kind among them, are such whose Business is Learning, and who are otherways provided for, than to depend on the Generosity of a Bookseller for their Bread. And whilst a business of that consequence is carried on by such Hands, we have no reason to expect any greater Performances.

But had we the good Fortune to have all the Arts and Sciences, and all the fine thoughts of all those great men that have writ, they would be so voluminous that many a man of Sense would labour under, as great a difficulty, as before, both for time to peruse and Money to purchase them: But this difficulty is quite removed, by the *Athenian Society's*, for One hour in a week is all the time, that is required to peruse them, and Two pence weekly sufficient to purchase those Papers, in which, every one may find the Marrow of what great Authors have writ on any curious Subject, with the improvement of many ingenious, and learned men upon it. Nor is the Reader confined to that silly Magisterial Argument of some of the old *Pytha-*

goraens, an *ipse dixit*, but is only desired to yield to the force of Reason it self, and what Authorities are brought, will easily be seen to be superfluous Proofs, unless about Matter of Fact, and the verity of any Passage in History, as that of *Josephus* about our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, which can be decided by nothing but the Testimony of all Ages up to the time when such Book was writ; which is a much more natural, and rational way to come to the Truth, than by the conjectural Arguments of some opinionated men of this present Age, who would needs prefer a meer Ghelt to a Cloud of Witnesses, a method quite contrary to all the Justice and Proceedings in the World.

If the Reader will consider what I have said, I am confident he can't but in Justice acquit me of *Flattery*, when I shall say, that all the Endeavours of the great men of all Nations, and Ages, from the beginning of Learning to this time, have not contributed to the encrease of Knowledge, so much as this Institution of the *Athenian Society*. What the Ancients did, I have already, in a few words discussed, and tho' I will not deny, that the Advance that has been made, since the Restauration of Learning, is very extraordinary, yet it must be granted that it falls short of this. 'Tis true, it was great to cast off Authorities, and to have Recourse alone to Reason, and Experiment, the only sure Foundation of all Learning, without which we spend our Years in painful Study, to fill our Heads with false, and empty Notions, foreign enough from Truth, which is the aim of all Study; for, without a pretty good assurance of that, the Mind can never be satisfied. But though the Treasure of Knowledge encreased so vastly, yet the Possessors of this Treasure did not grow much more numerous than of old; so that the Benefit of it reached only to such, as could go to the expence of Studying at the chargeable places called *Universities*, (few else being the better for this new Revolution in the Empire of Wisdom) most of the rest of Mankind were an ignorant Generation, that bore the Form, the Shape, the Image of Men, and had the use of their Tongue to make known their Thoughts, but it was only to discover, how very little difference there was betwixt them and their Brothers the *Brutes*. The Learned dealt with Mankind, till now, as some bigotted Clergy-men do, in giving the greatest part to Ignorance here, as they do to the Devil hereafter. I confess those few, and imperfect Translations we have, did a little refine the Conversation of a great many, who had not the good Fortune to be skill'd in Languages, but those Books are (as I have hinted before) too large, too difficult, and too dear for several, that are as willing, and as fit to learn, though they have not so good a Purse to spare, either their Money, or their Time on them, from their necessary Occasions of getting their Livelihood. But the *Society* have opened an easier way, and set Learning in so fair

fair a light, that won, with its Beauty, every one must with eagerness embrace it, in a form so agreeable to all Capacities; and those, who are so near a Kin to their Bodies, as not to care for the Embellishments of the Mind, will have a clearer Mark set upon them, of sordid Ignorance.

If these, and many more are the Advantages, that will accrue to the Public from this Undertaking, I believe the Learned will receive no less, I mean those who are not so full of themselves, that they cannot with Patience peruse the Works of any one else; for, all the knotty points of Philosophy, Divinity, Mathematics, &c. which have employ'd the curious part of the World thus long, are form'd into Queries by the Inquisitive, and answered with an abundance of Reason, by the Society, who are not only men of Parts, but also blest with a Temper that is *industrious to the highest degree*, and by consequence must give a general Satisfaction in their Performances, to the best of Judges in every Science.

But here methinks I see some phidding, grave, Gentleman, that has been at the Expence of many a laborious Year, to gain the Mastery of *Latin, Greek, and Hebrew*, with a supercilious frown, condemning this Society, not for falling short of their first Pretence, but because they keep up too close to it: For, says he, *What Honour will be due to Learned men, that have spent so many years in the Study of Languages, and the Criticism of them, if the Kernel of that Nut, they are so long a cracking, be given to every illiterate Fellow, that understands not what's Latin for the Book he reads*. This desire of Honour, and Veneration, and to be esteemed something more than Men, has been the cause of the small Progress of Learning in former Ages, as I have already shewn, and therefore ought to be cast away with the other Fopperies of those times, which obstructed the Growth of Knowledge; and the Gentlemen of this Kidney may satisfy themselves, that the number of *illiterate Fellows* will be much less, and yet the Skill in the Languages be in as much esteem, as it deserves, as long as the study of ancient Authors, especially the Poets (which can never be delivered in any other Language with that Force, and Beauty they have in their own) shall be valued by the Ingenious; Criticisms will still be pleasing, though a thousand times repeated, and to be a Critic, will be necessary to understand the original of those Books, that teach them to be so: Etymologies of Words, and Terms of Art will require some Skill in Languages, &c. Nay, this *Athenian Project* will rather contribute to that; for, the nature of many men (especially those that are very curious) is, to desire to see the Author itself, from whence such admirable things are drawn, which will oblige them to study Languages, to be able to understand them. So that that sort of Learning is in no fear of being lost, since now, it

may be, some Hundreds may be excited to it, which otherwise had never thought on it.

But I cannot imagine, why a man may not be Master of as much Sense, though he understand never a word of Latin, as if he were perfect in the darkest places of *Persius*; nor if his Sense can be thus improv'd, can he come under the Contempt of *illiterate*? But to satisfy these Sparks, that are for the keeping the World in Ignorance, let them not be so uneasy, for, I dare engage, there will still be Fools, and Blockheads enough for them, that will not make use of this Advantage.

Some of the Roman Pedants found the same fault with *Cicero's* Design in translating the Philosophy of the *Greeks* into Latin, for fear it should make Learning, or at least its Professors, too cheap. But, as that did not deter him from prosecuting his Undertaking, so this cannot be supposed to weigh at all with the present *Athenian Society*, who have undertaken a Province of more general Good, and carried it on with no less Force, and Wit.

Here I must not forget that Great, and Universal Good this Design affords to any Troubles of Mind, in removing (to use the words of the first *Mercury*) those Difficulties, and Dissatisfactions, that shame, or fear of appearing ridiculous by asking Questions, may cause several persons to labour under, who now have opportunities of being resolved in any Question without knowing their Informer; and (I may add, without being known themselves. And that these People might be wholly satisfied, the same *Mercury* says farther, thus—*And if as my tale, the Answer is not so satisfactory as they could wish, let them, as directed by the Advertisement, mention in what particular, and they shall have a fuller satisfaction in the next Paper.*

To enlarge upon this would be superfluous, since every man that is affected with any such Trouble will find, how much Ease, Advice will afford him, especially when he can have it without discovering himself to be grieved. It must stop many a desperate Hand, which unnaturally else might attempt upon the Breast, foolishly imagining, that an end of this Life would put a Period to their Sorrows, when it only adds an infinite Encrease to them. Methinks there is something divinely mysterious in this, that I can consult so many able Heads, on my private Distractions, and yet that they should still remain a Secret. Nay, they who propose these Questions are not the only that receive the Benefit of the Answer, since that may serve for many at the same time, under the same Exigencies, and even Posterity that has not yet a Being, will be indebted to it when in the like Cases, which will happen again. With good reason therefore has the Designer of the Emblem of that Society placed an Angel directing such unfortunate Desperado's to apply them.

themselves to them ; for if any thing under a Divinity can avert their Misery, it must be the force of their Reasons.

Having thus given a rough Draught of some of those Benefits which this Undertaking has, and will produce to Mankind, 'tis fit that the World know its Benefactor ; and indeed Justice requires, that he who first design'd, and propos'd it, should have that Reputation, that is due to him, and have his Name known to Posterity, who will not have a little share in the Obligation. He therefore who form'd the first Idea of this great, this noble Project, was Mr. *Dunton* the Bookseller, for whom all the *Mercuries* are printed ; the Tenth of *March*, 1697, he first brought the Embrio into form, and, as I am inform'd, there were two occasions which gave Life to it, the first upon reading that of the *Acts* 17.21. For all the Athenians and Strangers that dwell there gave themselves to nothing else, but to tell, or hear some News [or rather new things.]

— This has relation to the foregoing Verses, as I shall observe when I come to speak of the Reasons why they call themselves Athenians. His frequent reflection on this Text concurring, in time, with some great Injury he had received, gave Birth to this happy thought. For, being solicitous how he should be instructed in that Evangelical Lesson of forgiving Injuries, as it were by some Divine Instinct this Method came into his Head, by which both himself and others might be satisfied in that, and any other Doubt, without being troublesome to those, who would perhaps be not very well pleas'd with resolving Queries, and Doubts, unless they saw some Advantage, beside the Good of the Quarrel.

The Thought seems to be accidental (as we are apt to think all things for which we can give no positive Reason) like the Birth of a great many other great things ; for, all the greatest Events have had Rise from some Accident, without a premeditated Design. Were I a *Pythagorean*, I should imagine that it was a reminiscence of something like what had happened some Thousands of years ago in some far Country or other, which he had observed in the transmigration of his Soul through all parts of the World ; and that, as some things, or words we observe, when we see, or hear any remarkable thing, will bring the whole to ones Memory, so these concurring Circumstances had the same effect upon him ; but since we cannot find, that there ever has been any such Design (let a foot in any Nation, or Age, I must quit my *Pythagoric* Fancy, to come to a nearer Ghess.

I have observed in History, that there are certain * Critical Minutes, in time when strange, and unforeseen things come to pass, and that a Dream, a random Word, an unforeseen Action has begot mighty, and surprizing Revolutions, as well as great, and noble Arts. Thus *Martianus*, who was af-

terward Emperour of *Constantinople*, travelling near *Philippolis*, finding a man dead out of a Piety of those days, alighted from his Horse to bury him, which whilst he was doing, some of that City coming by, took him for the Murderer, and being brought to the Scaffold, by this strange Accident, was delivered by the Confession of him, that was really guilty ; and this gave Rise to his low Condition. A more public Turn was that *Philippicus*, who telling his Friend *Tiberius* (who by his means had gain'd the Empire of *Constantinople*) that he dream'd an Eagle alighted at his Head, was banish'd immediately into a barren Island, and from thence to the City *Eberzona*, where living in great Content, without any solicitous Thoughts about his Banishment, (so far he was from thinking of Empire) but *Justinian's* coming against him to take his Life, made him assume a sudden Resolution of taking the Name of Emperour ; and the successful Event shew'd it was more than an Accident, that put that Thought into his Head. To mention all the Revolutions in History, which were begun by such Accidents, would swell to a Volume, though very little to my purpose. What was the original of the Noble Order of the Garter, but the accidental falling of the Countess of *Salisbury's* Garter, from her Legg, in the King's presence ? There is nothing so divine as Music, (for, as *Cicero* says,

*All that we know of the Bless'd above,
Is, that they sing, and that they love.)*

yet this was first thought on by the accidental Observation of the different Sounds a Hammer made upon, an Anvil. *Simonides*, so wonderful in its effect, and power, and now of so universal use in Martial Affairs, was found out by an Accident, which is so well known, that I need not mention it. The Art of Memory owes its Birth to a fatal Accident ; and it was necessary that the Banqueting-house of *Scopa* should fall down, and kill all the Guests, that *Simonides* from thence might observe the Order, and Method of the Art of Memory. So it was necessary that Mr. *Dunton* should have received an Injury, that the World might be oblig'd with a Design of as great a value. All the study of that great Master in the Mathematics *Archimedes*, could not resolve that Curiosity which *Hiero* King of *Syracusa* propos'd to him : Nor could he imagine how to find how much Gold, the Goldsmith had stole, without destroying the Work, to know by ocular demonstration, till going by chance into a full Bath, the Water ran over the brim as his Body entered, this Accident brought the Solution into his Head, full of which, he ran from thence, naked as he was, to put his Thought into execution, crying out aloud all the way that he went, * *I have it, I have it.*

* *Accidit in puncto quod non speratur in anno.*

* *Esperare, Expectare.*

To omit the Mariner's Compass, and a great many other noble Inventions, the discovery of the new World it self was at first but a random Thought, of *Columbus*, from the observation of the setting Sun, with a *quid si*. Mr. *Dunton* has done more than *Columbus*, for he has not only found out a way to discover new Worlds, (for the Industry, and past Performances of the *Athenian Society* promise not a few new Discoveries in Nature) but also how to People the thinly inhabited Kingdoms of Philosophy, with a more numerous Generation. I have heard some of the Would-be-Wits object against this Design, merely because invented by a *Bookseller*; but that is so foolish a Flaw to find in it, that it discovered their Ignorance, as well as Partiality; for first, several noble Inventions have had more unlikely Authors; to instance only in that of Printing, designed by a Soldier, (though a certain Writer has dubbed him a Knight from a Trooper, (*Eggs* being an equivocal word) than one that deals in Wit and Learning, and may well be supposed to converse with many of those Authors he sells. And next, the Learned know, that *Scaliger* was a *Bookseller*, and *Stephanus* a Printer.

Having thus let the World know to whom it is obliged for this Advantageous Project, 'tis but Justice that it give him that Encouragement, the usefulness of his Design deserves; and not buy up the Ungenerous, and Unjust Attempts of any Interlopers, who wanting Wit to invent any thing of equal worth, meanly Usurp upon the Right of another, and aim to live upon that Crop which was manured by his Industry, and Charge. Every considering man, must needs think, that it cost him not a little to establish it, and bring it to the knowledge of the World, and therefore he ought, in Reason, to reap the Profit of it. If the little Inventor of any small Mechanic Instrument, for the public use, have so far a Propriety in it, as to deserve that Royal Security, a Patent, that none shall enjoy the Advantage of his Industry for above Fourteen years, till his Labour be in some measure rewarded: With much higher reason ought the Inventor or Designer of this Noble Institution, which contributes, as I have made appear, to all manner of Knowledge, and the general Benefit of all Mankind, since none are so Great, or so Inferior, but may make use of his Discovery. 'Twould be ingrateful therefore, as well as unjust, in every one, not to defend him in the possession of that, which in Equity is his Due, by discountenancing those who would invade his proper Right. But I shall say more of the Interlopers in the last part of this Discourse.

Having passed through the Novelty, and Usefulness of the Design of the *Athenian Project*, and given an account who invented it, and by what Accident it was first thought of, not omitting the Charge the Undertaker has been at to bring it to that establishment

it is now in: I hope it will not be esteemed a Digression, if I add a word or two in consideration, of the Difficulties, which might justly have frightened the Authors from complying with the Importunity of the Bookseller in the performance; for, 'tis evident from their Works, that they foresaw 'em.

They must be men of more than ordinary Resolution, as well as Learning, as their Performances shew, else the great Pains that is required to go through this Undertaking, would have hindered them from entering into this Society, which, as themselves well observe, seems calculated for Objections; for, it is no easie matter to give a good Answer to the curious Enquiries into Nature, experimental Knowledge, and nice Reason being the only Guides, as well as the only Satisfaction in those Affairs. Divinity brings far greater Difficulties with it, since in Controversial Points (and there is no point of Theology, but what has been controverted) variety of Opinions are endless, and Disputes may be drawn out into Volumes; yet this could not dash their Resolutions of contributing to the Publick Satisfaction, what Reason, and the highest Probabilities afforded, and a reasonable man can desire no more, since they have often assured the World, that they pretend not to an Infallibility, and shall be willing to acknowledg their Errors and, publish any Sentiment, that any of the Ingenious, shall send to them upon any Subject, both in Natural Experiments, and Reasons in opposition to their own. Nothing can be more candid and ingenuous, than their Letter to Mr. *Travelty*, part of which I must transcribe, to shew the Reader that I speak not at random; in thus—

Mr. *Travelty*,

*I*f at any time our Answers are not so satisfactory as we could wish, if you will, as directed by our Advertisement, mention in what Particular, you shall have a fuller Satisfaction in our next Mercury. If this won't suffice, we farther assure you, whatever Questions you dislike, shall be all answered anew by us (Common Equity to our Querrists obliging us to it) and in new Answers to the said Questions, our Reader shall meet with all the Objections you send us, the best of your Thoughts, and our own Improvements thereon.

For a farther Proof of this, let them that think this not enough, consult the Preface to the Second Volume. This Promise they have comply'd with as often as any Objector has thought fit to give them his Reasons for what he said.

But the Pains, and Industry that were required to return good Answer to every Persons Query, was not the only Difficulties, since when they had done that to the best Standard, and beyond the Exceptions of the Learned, they could not expect (as indeed they

they express in their second *Mercury*) to please every Body, that being an impossible Task: And, 'tis plain from their Introduction to their first *Mercury*, that they did not think they should appear in Print, and that in so nice a Design without Opposers. For, as the incomparable Cowley says, in his *Pindaric*, on the Royal Society,

*Whoever would deposed Truth advances
Into the Throne usurp'd from us,
Must feel at first the blows of Ignorance,
And the sharp points of envious Wit.*

This as they foresaw, so they have met with in abundance, both from their private Quærists, and public Enemies; though indeed most of the Efforts that have appeared in Print, have shewn more Gall, than Brains, and taken a great deal of pains to convince the World how little they were guilty of *What*. For this Reason they may almost forgive their avowed Opposers, because they punish themselves in the very act of Injury against them, by the loss of their Reputation both as to *Sence*, and *Morals*, though that they perhaps value not very much. But there are a sort of very civil, dear, caressing Animals, that with the air of a Friend are more troublesome than the most able Adversary. I am afraid (says one) I shall be a Poet, direct me how to avoid that Fate of the common Proverb, *Poets are poor by Defiance*. Nay, some of the Quærists are so full of their own dear selves, that they are restless, till they see their impertinent Niceties furnish'd in Print, and think the World is oblig'd to give way to be entertained with their Follies. As for example; one witty Gentleman, who had a mind to make Love in *Mood and Form*, desires to know in the next *Mercury*, for (adds he most surprizing, and wittily) *Lovers are impatient, how he may attain to an effectual form of Courtship*. — Another something angry with the haughty port of Indignation, tells them, — *He (even he) wants to know why those Questions he sent about six weeks since, are not yet answered*. He adds very gravely, *I think my Questions deserve a Thought as well as any Bodies else*. There is nothing certainly more uneasy to a man of Sence, than to be pestered with a Fool; nor for a man of Piety, than to be oblig'd to hear Blasphemy, Atheism, and other Prophaneness, but this Society being compos'd both of men of Sence and Piety, (though I am sensible some of the Town Wits, and Beauties, will think the last but a canting Commendation) have had abundant cause to exercise their Patience. Horace had never half the Fatigue with the Poetaster, as they must have had, with both Male, and Female Impertinencies. One would know, whether any two men have the same number of Hairs; another is troubled with a squeamish Conscience, and would know if it be lawful to eat black Puddings; a third, a great Enquirer into Mysteries, and I believe very studious of *Cornelius Agrippa's*

occult Philosophy, would know what the King of France, is doing at that time. 'Twere endless to run through the Follies they have been troubled with; and I shall not meddle with the other, that fall under Prophecies and Atheism, abundance of which they, in their Prefaces to the first, and second Volumes, have let the World know they have received, which but to repeat in the Quærist's words, would be like selling of Poyson in the streets to every one that passes them.

Though I have not run through half the Difficulties which presented themselves to the Noble Authors of the *Athenian Mercury*, upon a consideration of the mighty Task they were going to undertake, yet no private Inconvenience could deter them from the Public Good.

Having done the first Professor of this Design, some justice already, I think my self oblig'd not to forget that Great young man, who first, like *Jason*, dared so boldly to venture out into the Billows of the Critics, and lead the way to the rest of the Herds that were to go in search of the Golden Fleece of Wisdom, and Learning. I am sorry I must not let the World know his Name (for it was begun by one) who had so great and generous a Zeal for the general Benefit, that he would not let those Difficulties I have mentioned, or any other Consideration outweigh it: No, he only kept the Nobleness of the End in his view, fixing his Eye on the farther brink, that he might not see the breadth of the Stream he was going to leap, or to express the noble Thought in the best of our English Poets own words, Mr. Dryden I mean, in the *Conquest of Granada*.

Almahide says to Almanzor.

*Alm. Great Souls discern not when the Leaps
too wide,
Because they only view the farther side, &c.*

That which follows is also applicable to the same Great young man.

*Alm. — There's a Necessity in Fate
Why still the brave, bold man is fortunate:
He keeps his Object ever full in sight,
And that Assurance holds him firm and
right, &c.*

'Tis no small difficulty to determine which was the greatest Wonder, the Boldness of the Undertaking, or the Ability he has shewn in such unripe years in the Performance. *Hercules* his destroying the Serpents in the Cradle, has found Work for the Poets a great many Ages. But he has done more than all the *Herculean* Labours, at an Age when the rest of Mankind are but ripening; for, the mighty Sence he writes, will not let me doubt, but that he foresaw what infinite *Mydra's* he was to engage with: But he has pe-

perused it to a Miracle, shewing the Scholar without the *Pedant*, the Philosopher without the stiff, and obscure Expressions, and superfluous Repetitions of the School, but every thing he writ in the first Mercury, had a pleasing genteel Air, and near Turn through every line, and discover'd profound Reason could be lodg'd in a youthful Head, and that it met there with a Softness, that did not obscure its great, and severe Ideas. This his Boldness, Learning, and Ingenuity, ought to endear him to every man, that pretends to value Excellence. And though I confess my self the most unworthy of his Conversation, yet I must assume the Vanity to boast, that no man can value his Acquaintance, and Friendship more, though I have not yet the Honour to know him, having never had but once, and then only, a transient sight of him.

I am sure, nothing but his Modesty, or the Envy of some impotent Aspirers to the Names of Authors, will say, that what I have here advanc'd about him, has any relish of Flattery; since I have the Judgment of more than one of the greatest Scholars of the Age, to justify my Sentiments; but I will not foretell what I believe they themselves may some time, or other communicate to the World.

I shall conclude this First part of my History with the Reasons, why they assumed the Title of Athenian, for even that has lain under the mercile's Phangs of the World's Critics. If they had taken the Name of *Lacedemonian*, indeed it would have looked something odd, and as if it were done in spite of Learning, to borrow a Title from that place, which scarce ever afforded a Philosopher, or any Man of Learning; but the *Athenians* were the most curious, and inquisitive People of Antiquity, as that Verse I have before quoted out of the *Æt*, demonstrates, which I shall add here to the two foregoing Verses of the same Chapter, v. 19. *And they took him, (viz. St. Paul) and brought him into Mars's street, saying, May we not know what this NEW Doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is.* Ver. 20, *For thou bringest certain STRANGE things to our Ears; we would know, therefore, what these things mean.* Ver. 21, *For all the Athenians and Strangers that dwell there, gave themselves to nothing else, but either to tell or to hear News, [or rather new things.]* This, as it gave occasion to the first rise of the Design, so it is enough to justify the Title that was chose for it, because the Business, and end of it is to answer the Niceties, and curious Enquiries into Arts and Sciences.

All that know any thing of History, or have read any of the old Authors, must be sensible, that *Athens* was in that veneration with Antiquity, that it was the only place of Study in those days, and from thence was all Europe civiliz'd, and taught Arts, and Sciences. Cicero, in the Introduction to his Offices, which he writes to his Son, at that

time hearing Philosophy there, that he had the advantage of not only having *Cratippus* for his Master, but even in *Athens* itself, as if the place added to the facility of his Learning, and he adds the reason of it, because the Examples of so many wise men, that had flourish'd in that City, could not but stir him up to Emulation; for, there *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and all the great Philosophers, learned, and taught; there were the Schools of every Sect, and scarce any (I might say none) that were received into the number of the Wise, and Learned, that were not beholden for their Education to *Athens*: Thither *Anacharsis* came from *Scythia*, and was so taken with the Laws, as well as Wisdom of the *Athenians*, that endeavouring to introduce both into his own Country, he was killed by his Brother, and King: There *Demosthenes* liv'd, and flourish'd in Oratory, and *Sophocles*, and *Euripides* in Tragedy: There liv'd *Eupolis*, *Cratinus*, *Aristophanes*, (though the last was born in *Rhodes*, yet he liv'd there, and excelled in their Dialect) and *Menander*, all Comic Poets. *Demosthenes* was so great an Orator, that he excelled not only all the *Greeks*, but put in for the Palm of Fame with *Tully* himself, and if he carry it not from him, yet holds the Balance in equilibrium. The Value the Government of *Athens* put upon the Learned in all Sciences, afforded Encouragement to the Ingenious, to improve them. Both Comedy and Tragedy owe their Birth to *Athens*; and indeed, the Dramatic was more in esteem there than Epic Poetry, being the more immediately useful for Man's Life, Comedy correcting the Vices of it, and Tragedy (by Examples more powerful than Precepts) stirring the Minds of Youth up to Heroic Actions, and keeping Virtue in esteem, by shewing its Reward, and the Punishment of Vice: Though 'tis said of *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, that one represented the Accidents of Human Life, without regard to that Poetic Justice, as they too often happen; the other, as they ought to have been. The Esteem these Dramatic Poets were in, may appear by two Instances, one of *Eupolis*, the other of *Euripides*: *Eupolis* having writ Seventeen Comedies after the old Method, with a great deal of Liberty exposing the Vices of the People, was slain in a Sea-fight betwixt the *Athenians*, and *Lacedemonians*. *Athens* resented his Loss so much, that it made a Law, That no Poet should after that venture himself in the War, such necessary Members of the Commonwealth, that wise State thought them. When the Death of * *Euripides* was known at *Athens*, (who some say was killed by the Dogs of *Achelaus*) there were several Embassies dispatched to *Macedon*, to obtain leave to convey his Body to his, and their own Country, but *Achelaus*, would not part with the Treasure of his Bones, notwithstanding

* The worth of *Euripides* was, that he hated War, and that he was commonly called *Martyr*.

ding their repeated Importunities. Nay, I may call the great *Homer* an *Athenian*, since *Athens* was not the least of those Cities, that contended for his Birth, which are enumerated in a Greek Distic to this Sense:

*Seven Cities strive for mighty Homer's Birth,
Athens, Smyrna, Rhodes, Colophon, Sala-
min, Chios, and Argos.*

Ἐπτα πόλεις διεζύοντο καὶ μὲν Ὀμήρῳ,
Σμύρῃ, ῥόδῳ, ῥόδοι, σάλαμιν, ῥῳ, ἄργῳ,
καὶ χίῳ.

Next to Poets, we must remember Painters, and Statuaries, which flourished in *Athens*; of the latter *Phidias* was the most excellent, but consult *Pliny's* Natural History, 36th Book, and there you will find a full account of both. The World was not more obliged to *Athens*, for *Philosophy*, *Oratory*, and *Poetry* (to omit Statuary, and Painting, just mentioned) than for History, as *Thucydides*, and *Xenophon* may evince (to omit *Herodotus*, who only retired into the *Athenian* Territories, from domestic Tyranny, where the Muses always found a secure Retreat; and tho' he was not born an *Athenian*, would dye one.) *Thucydides* was the best of the Greek Historians, being so impartial a Writer, that in the *Peloponnesian* War, which he was going to write, he paid for Intelligence of the Transactions on both sides, that so he might perfectly find out the Truth, justly suspecting, that as both Parties would palliate their own Losses, so if he knew the Affairs of each only from themselves, he

should never arrive at the Truth. And it is to be wish'd, that none but a man of * *Quality*, and Estate, would meddle with compiling of Histories, who are or ought to be above the Partiality, and the weakness of being biass'd by Affection, or Interest, it being more below the Honour of a great man, to falsify the Truth to Posterity, than to be guilty of a Lye in Conversation.

* For such was *Thucydides*, deriving himself from *Miltiades*, and *Cimon*, two of the *Athenian* Commanders, and they from *Esacus*, and so from *Jove*.

Xenophon too was an *Athenian*; he took up the History of the *Peloponnesian* War, where *Thucydides* left off, and was the first Philosopher that writ an History: And 'tis the Opinion of *Cicero*, in his Book *De Oratore*, that *Xenophon*, in his *Παισιαν*, consulted not so much the Truth of the Story, as his Design of forming an Example of a Perfect Prince, and Commander, for he was a Soldier, as well as Philosopher, and Historian. 'Twould be endless to mention but the Names of all those that have flourished in every Science, and Art in this famous City. From what I have here produc'd, will sufficiently appear, that since all the Arts, and Learning of the old World owed their Beginning (nay, and perhaps Perfection too, though afterward lost in the Inundation of Barbarity which from the North over-run all *Europe*) to *Athens*, with just Reason did this Learned Society make choice of that Appellation, whose Aim it is to advance all Knowledge, and diffuse a general Learning through the *many*, and by that civilize more now, in a few years, than *Athens* it self did of old during the Ages it flourished.

THE SECOND PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE Athenian Society.

IN the First part of this History I have given you an account of the Novelty, Advantage, Inventor, and occasion of this Noble Undertaking. I have touch'd upon the Difficulties that attend it; the Noble Daring of the first Author; and, lastly, I have advanc'd some Reasons, why this Society assumed the Title of *Athenian*. In That, I brought

you to its beginning; in This, I shall (with all the Brevity the Copiousness of the Subject will allow) proceed to its Infancy and Growth; and from thence pass to the Manly Performances of the Society, when established.

Though the whole design of this Institution may be gathered from what has been said in the First Part, yet I think it necessary to

to premise an entire Prospect of it here, since that will not a little contribute to the Satisfaction of the Reader, by avoiding Obscurity and Confusion, setting things in as clear a Light as possible, and in that form, which the decency of Order requires.

"That, which they first proposed to themselves, was not only to answer all manner of nice, and curious Questions, in *Drumy*, *Physick*, *Law*, *Philosophy*, *History*, *Poetry*, *Mathematics*, *Trade*, and all other Questions proposed by either Sex, or in any Language; but also to give an account of the most considerable Books, printed in *England*, or transmitted to them, from foreign parts; and to accomplish this effectually, the Undertaker, resolving to spare no Charges to gratify the Ingenious, settled a Correspondence beyond Sea: And tho' all this were enough to expect from the extraordinary Parts, and Industry of any Society of no greater extent, yet they resolving to spare no Labour, proceeded farther by inserting the Conferences, and Transactions of several *English Virtuosi*, and whatever the *Genius* of our Nation would relish in the *Acta Eruditorum Lipsiæ*, the *Paris Journal des Sçavans*, the *Giornali de Letterati*, printed at *Rome*, the *Universal Historical Bibliothecæ*, and other learned and ingenious Essays of other Nations. That so, as our Merchants supplied us with the Manufactures, and Commodities of all Countries, we should not want that Production, so much more valuable in its self, and in the esteem of every wise man, their *Talents* and *Learnings*, whatever the curious and brisk *Genius* of the *French*, the *Floridness* of the *Italians*, and the *Industry* of the *German*, the *Gravity* of the *Spaniards*, should from time to time gratify their several Countries with, this Great SOCIETY have generously, and successfully imported into *England*, and, by that means, made all Nations contribute to the Power and Glory of our Empire of *Ullst*, as the conquered World did of old, to the Grandeur, and Wealth of *Rome*; this a far more noble *Tribute*, and a far more exalted *Glory*, every man in Justice therefore ought to honour them with the august Name of *Patriots*, above most that stand blustering Candidates for it.

Yet farther, to make their Endeavours the more satisfactory to all men, this Society have all along invited every one, that has any Experiment, or curious Instance, which they know to be *Truth*, and Matter of *Fact*, circumstantiated, with time, and place, to send them to them. These Experiments, and Instances they not only promised to insert in their *Mercuries*, but also endeavour to find out a *Demonstration* for those, which the Senders could not. So great is their admirable Zeal for the Good of the Public, and the Satisfaction of all curious Enquirers in to natural Speculations.

All these great Parts of this *Mighty Design*, could not possibly be brought into the week

by *Mercurius*, which had not room to contain the hundredth part of the Answers to those *Quæries*, which they soon receiv'd; therefore for the speedier satisfaction of *Quærists*, and the publication of all these *Curiosities* I have spoke of, they judg'd it absolutely necessary, at the compleating every eighteen Numbers, to print twelve more of Answers to *Quæries*, by that means, if possible, to obviate the Impatience of some of those, who sent their Doubts, and *Curiosities*, to be resolv'd: These made up one Volume, to which as a *Supplement*, that is to perfect their Design, is added, (I mean to the four first) the Abstracts of all Books of value, both domestic, and foreign, with curious, and diverting Dissertations upon several nice Subjects. The fifth Supplement, to comply further with their *Quærists* Importunities for speedier Answers, is compos'd of the Resolution of Doubts, as the single *Mercuries* are. What shall be the Subject of their future Supplements, I shall have occasion to speak of in the third, and last part of this History.

Though what I have mentioned already may seem the Labour of Ages, yet they still went farther, and we find very early, their Resolution of gratifying the World with a new System of *Philosophy*, a thing as much desired, as wanted, that of *Aristotle* being so false, and that of *Descartes* so imperfect. I shall say no more of this Work here, because I shall have occasion to speak of it again in the third part.

But, that the World might be fully acquainted with this whole Design, they have frequently published it, both in the *Mercury*, Volumes, and Supplement, and any one that desires, may read it sum'd up all together in their Fifth Supplement: So that none can plead Ignorance, that shall intrench upon their Design, and Method, and none can be dissatisfied, that they have not a full account of so many Advantages they may reap from the several Endeavours of this SOCIETY. Here it will not be improper for me to give some account of the Method they propos'd to themselves for the prosecution of their Design, for that is indeed a necessary part of it: That Order which Justice required they made choice of; that is, that those *Quæries* that came first should be first answered, unless a greater Good interpos'd, as the answering any *Popular Quæry*, that might be of service to the Government; for, the Public Good, is granted by all men, I think, to be preferred to the Private: Or some curious Accident, or remarkable Providence, that's Matter of *Fact*, and wants a demonstration. Here too the general Advantage comes in, and then 'tis but fit that Particulars of less consequence should expect a little, and give way. Next, some extraordinary Scruple of Conscience, which wants a speedy Answer: And for the satisfaction of such, I think, no reasonable man, but would willingly admit his less weighty Quæry should be superseded a while, since he

is sure after that to come in, in his turn.

Farther, that the Quærists should not be disappointed in their expectations of Answers, by their faults, they have laid down these excellent Rules.

I. To look over the Indexes of their Volumes, to see if their Quæries are not already answered to their satisfaction.

II. That none send obscene Questions, as not fit to be answered by any that pretend not to as great Debauchery as the Senders of them.

III. No Riddles, or Equivocations, &c. because (as they very well observe in the Preface to the Fourth Volume, whence I have taken this) they are of no use to the Public.

IV. Nothing, the Answer of which may be a Scandal to the Government, or an Abuse to particular persons.

V. Nothing, that may be destructive to the Principles of Virtue, and sound Knowledge.

VI. That no Quærist send above one, or two Questions, at the most, at one time, for then they will be the sooner at liberty to send again, and perhaps something more curious, than what they sent at first.

If every one would but observe these necessary Rules; they would not meet with those Disappointments, they complain of; but if they will observe no Method, or Reason, but their own Fancy, and Whim, 'tis juster to punish their Vanity with Neglect, and Contempt, than for the sake of such unaccountable Gentlemen, to break all Order, which is the Life of all Performances. Let them act but regularly, and the Society desires they may be as Nice, and Curious as they please.

Nor can I omit a Method proposed to the Society by some ingenious Well-wisher to their Designs, for a farther satisfaction of the Quærists, this being the proper place to insert it. This Gentleman having considered the Fatigue of the SOCIETY, in receiving so many Letters on one Question, sent them a Project for their Ease, which they have publish'd in the Preface to their Fourth Volume, and there approv'd of it; 'tis thus.

— That every Quærist set two Letters to every Question he sends, and some number, consisting of three Figures, thus — A. B. 231, or A. C. 312, B. H. 132, H. F. 721, R. N. 472, &c. for it is not likely that any two should light upon the same Letters, and Numbers too; so that if they are publicly acknowledged in the Mercuries to be received, by inserting the Letters, and Numbers, with those marks at the end of each, the Quærists would soon be satisfied, viz. those marked thus (*) will never be answered, as coming under some of

the above-mentioned Exceptions: Those marked thus (+) have been answered already, Vol. n. Those marked thus (†) will be answered in their order.

Having thus given the Reader a View of the Design of the Athenian Society, and the Method they propos'd to themselves, and others, I shall now proceed in that form I have set down in the beginning of this Second Part.

A Paper entituled the Athenian Gazette resolving, weekly, all the most nice, and curious Questions, propos'd by the Ingenious, dated Tuesday March the 17th, 1690, was the first Essay of this Noble Undertaking, that the World was gratified with: Which, tho' it were the Performance of one only, as I have said, yet gave the critical part of the Town as great a satisfaction in what it contain'd; as it did admiration at the strangeness and seeming-impossibility of the Attempt. This satisfaction was so general, that in the third Number, I find Quæries came in so fast, that publick notice was given to send in no more, till those were dispatched, that were sent already: An evident Argument, that the number of those that sent had some Belief, that the Society were able to comply with their desires, else it had been foolish to have been at the Expence of writing, and sending. In the second number the Tide is altered, from Gazette, to Mercury, the reason of which they give in their Twelfth, in Answer to this Question. — What is the Reason of your changing the Name of your Athenian Gazette, into that of the Athenian Mercury? Oza (says the Author) signifies a Treasury, and therefore we reserve it for the general Title of our Volumes, designing to entitle them, the Athenian Gazette, or Cassiodorian Mercury: And Mercurius signifying a Messenger, is the more proper Title for the single Papers, which run about, to Coffee-houses, and elsewhere, to seek out Athenians.

But as this Undertaking was too great for any one man to go through with (yet if any one man could, the first Author did enough to convince us of his Ability to do it) it was thought fit, both for Ease, Dispatch, and the fuller Satisfaction of all men, to receive in several Members to the composing a just number, for compleating the Undertaking, by having men qualified with all sorts of Learning, that so all sorts of Questions might receive just Answers. I presume it will not be ingrateful to any Reader, if I here give him an account of the Qualifications of the several Members (though there is scarce one of them, but what might be call'd a Master in every Science) which make up this Learned Society. I shall therefore set them down in that order the nature of their Studies, in my Opinion, requires, without any regard to the particular Merit of their Persons, to which I must (with a great deal of regret) confess my self a Stranger, though I have

have had an imperfect account of some of them, from those that did pretend to be acquainted with them.

A Divine.

A Philosopher.

A Physician:

A Poet.

A Mathematician.

A Lawyer.

A Civilian.

A Chyrurgion.

An Italian.

A Spaniard.

A French-man.

A Dutch-man.

The last four are rather Servants, than Members of the Society, like the Interpreters of Princes, to give a faithful account of such Quæries that may be sent in their several Languages, that the Society may come up to the just Thoughts of the Quærists, and also to give a perfect Translation of those several pieces of Wit, and Learning, which, I have said, were brought from beyond Sea, to be delivered to us in our Mother-tongue: From these the Society can be fully satisfied in the Idioms, and nicest parts of each Language, which few but the Natives (and of them only the Learned) understand. So careful they are of giving their own Country the genuine Sense, as well as Marrow of all the stranger-Authors they make free of our Tongue.

The other eight afford so ample and so just a Theme of Praise, that nothing but my Ignorance of them, can hinder me from giving the World a more particular knowledge of them: And this confines me much against my Will to the *Divine*, the *Physician*, and *Mathematician*, tho' I shall have occasion, in the pursuit of this Discourse, to touch upon the Performances of most, if not all of the rest.

As *Divinity* is the most sublime, and sacred of Studies, so I think myself obliged to begin with the *Divine*, and I am satisfied that the rest of this *Learned Society*, will subscribe to this just Preference, I give him, if not for the veneration of his Character, yet for his own proper *Merits*; so great is the *Reverence* of his Person, the *Profoundness* of his Knowledge, not only in the Holy Scriptures, Councils, Fathers, and the rest, that compose that mighty *Science* of *Theology*, but also in every other *Art*, that comes within the number of the *Liberal*, the most barren Subject growing fertile, and divertive, to admiration, by the *Genial warmth* of his *WIT*. How great, and apparent are his *Zeal* and *Abilities* in the direction of *Souls*; How extraordinary, and how general is the satisfaction he gives the *Doubtful*, and *Troubled in Mind*! how strong! how invincible is the Reason, with which he confirms the wavering, and confutes the *De-relies*, and *Atheists* of this *Profligate Age*! Then, what can farther contribute to the Progress, of *Piety*, and Learning, than the *Manly sweetness* of his *Style*, for whatever he writes is soft without *Affectation*, and *Satire*, and learned without *Pedantry*. Yet if all these *Virtues* were wanting, the affability, and agreeableness of his *Temper*, and Com-

versation, the tender *Compassion* he has for the *Sufferings*, of his fellow-Creatures (above the consideration of which all his stupendious Learning, and Parts, are not able to transport him) both in *spiritual*, and *temporal* Exigencies, were enough to draw as great a Veneration from all, as is lawful to pay to *Man*. Finally, since *Actions* are more valuable, than Words, his *Deeds* give a nobler, and truer Character of him, than I can presume, with the inability, and weakness of my *Pen*, to draw. All that I shall therefore add, is, that if it were possible that any such thing could be, as an *UNIVERSAL PRIEST*, certainly his *Duty* would be to take care of the *spiritual Good* of all *Mankind*; and then, I am very certain, that *None* would be more worthy, and more justly qualified, than *HE*, who has beforehand shewn, in all his *Writings* and *Actions*, so universal a Concern, and *Zeal* for all, that bear the glorious Image, of his *MAKER*. So truly apostolical are his Inclinations, that all *Pains*, all *Labor*, all *Watchings*, and *Prayers*, tho' for the most inconsiderable of men, are far more delightful to him than *Glory*, and *Honours* to the *Ambitious*, *Wealth* to the *Miser*, or *Pleasure* to the *Voluptuous*, nay, than the Embraces of his *Mistress* to the faithful, and long-sighing *Lover*: But all these fleeting Joys, which so dazzle, and invite the World, are too little, too inconsiderable to give a just Idea of that of His, which makes a near approach to those, it has not entered into the Heart of *Man* to imagine. It were to be wished, that a great many of the Clergy would have him in view, as a sure direction of their Behaviour, since an imitation of his practical *Virtues*, would soon remove the *Odium*, too great a number of them lye under, and confute the prophane Enemies of that *SACRED BODY*, by the most prevalent of Arguments, *EXAMPLE*.

All these Excellencies were very well known to Mr. *Dunton*, so that he could not imagine any one more fit to propose this Design first to, than him, who being not a little sensible of the Benefit, the generality would reap by it, gave him all the Encouragement in the World, that is, a promise of his Assistance, when he had once set it on foot; for, 'twas fit first to see, whether the Town would relish the *Blessing* with that Justice, and Applause it deserved.

Tho' this Discourse be not designed as a *Panegyric*; but *History*, yet I cannot prevail with my self to think this short account of some of the Members of this *SOCIETY* any deviation, or digression; or if it were, yet I cannot (and I am sure all, that love Learning, and Ingenuity will easily forgive, if not commend it) pass over the *Physician*, tho' I confess, it would be more prudent, and pardonable, to say nothing than not enough of an illustrious Subject, but as, *Who was ever in Love, and Wife?* is received as a just Excuse, for the Failings of a *Lover*, so I hope, the more moderate, will grant me, that it is

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equally

equally hard to admire, and be silent, when the *Object* of ones admiration presents it self.

It was said of a certain Great man, that if all the Libraries in the World were lost, and not one Book remaining, that the general Knowledge He was Master of, was capable of teaching Mankind, all the Arts, and Sciences in perfection, the same I can with Truth, and Justice say of the *Physician*, who carries the whole Circle of the Sciences in his Head; but that which is most admirable, and rare in one of his Profession, KNOWLEDGE, and WIT, *make him not prophane; Piety, and Religion* illustrate all his actions. Never was any Question propos'd by ingenious *Malice*, or *Curiosity*, however new, and surprizing, but with all the *readiness*, and *facility* in the World, he gave not only fair, and amusing *Ideas* of it, but full, and most *evident Demonstrations*. It is no satisfaction at all to me to meet with Wit, and Learning, in a man of a little *low Soul*, and *ill Principle*, because I cannot understand how he, that has a just notion of things, should not make a better choice, for the regulation of his Mind; so I am wonderfully ravish'd, with Delight, when I find the contrary, as here in this Great, this Learned, this Good, and this Ingenious Man; for, he is so generous (*a very uncommon Virtue*) that he could never be prevail'd with, to admit of any other Consideration, for his Trouble, in this Affair, than the Good of the Public, thinking it so much below him to mingle Interest with so noble a Design, that I am confident it would be the only certain way to make him forsake it, to press any Reward, besides what it contains in itself, for, *Virtue is its own Reward*, in his Opinion: Yet he is far from condemning those, whose Circumstances (too often the Fate of the Ingenious) will not allow them to imitate him in this Generosity, since 'tis confest very lawful for any man, to live by his PEN, as well as any other way. Besides, many great Divines, who, we may justly suppose, have the Good of many in their Eyes, do yet set no small, or inconsiderable value on their Copies; tho' it must be granted, that he excells them as much in this, as a free Agent does a mercenary one. I can say no more of him, than that he is a worthy Companion of so great a man, as the Divine, I have spoke of just before him.

All that I have to inform the World of the Mathematician, is, that he is the Person that first put the design in execution, whom I mention'd in the First Part; and I shall only add here, that his Learning is as universal, as his Sence of things is *fine*, and *curious*. So that this Society seems to be compos'd by something more than human Judgment, in selecting able men, since each of them is sufficient to perform this mighty task alone.

By what has been said of these three Members, we may reasonably suppose, that the rest are not ill match'd. And, as in the search

of the Secrets of Nature we illustrate the more obscure, by the more evident, so here we may, by those I have been able to get some account of, guess at the Excellence of the rest, the greatest part of which will not accept of any pecuniary Gratuity at all.

This Society being compos'd of such pious, and generous, as well as learned men, I wonder what they could propose to themselves, who endeavour'd to tempt, and persuade them to forsake the first Undertaker, on a poor mercenary Consideration. Could they imagine, that such men would be guilty of so much *Baseness*, as to forget that Obligation they had enter'd into (for, I am inform'd, they oblig'd themselves never to engage in the like Design for any one else) never to desert Mr. Dunton? Could they have so weak an Opinion of that Worth they courted, as to press an Action upon it, which must necessarily sully all its Glories, and make it of no value? But these men had nothing in their Thoughts, but the supplanting their Neighbor, in his right; they would else have foreseen the Answer, they without doubt receiv'd, *That if it were an Immorality, nay, Injustice for another, though never concern'd with Mr. Dunton, to interfere with his design, because it was entirely his own Project; how much more ungenerous would it be for them, who have enter'd into a Friendship with him to betray that Trust he had reposed in them, when he might (had it not been for the Esteem, and Value he had for their Justice, and Parts) have engaged those that perhaps would have proved more generous.*

The vast Offers that have been made them, with no Success, shews, that Mr. Dunton knew his men very well, he would never else have had the Courage, through all Difficulties, and Oppositions, to have persue'd the Design, till in sight of all Obstacles he established it; which if he had never done, there had been no *Motive* for Interloping, few being willing to quit the Paths of Just, and Right, where no Advantage invites. Nor is it to be wonder'd in our Age, that, when he had rais'd his Project to a *Staple Commodity*, others have endeavour'd to rob him of his Profit, when they were at no Charge to bring it to perfection, who would not perhaps have regarded it, if it had been first propos'd to them. Thus, I am confident, few Booksellers in Town would have given Ten pound for the Copy of *The whole Duty of Man*, before it had been printed at all, yet now there is none, but would give an Hundred pound for it: They whose Timeousness hinder them from venturing upon any thing themselves, are always very eager to pursue, what another with success has undertaken. But these interloping Gentlemen were extremely deceiv'd, when they made their Applications here, where they always found men that knew the Obligation, and Value of their Word better than to forfeit it for that which they never esteem'd, that is a little mean Lucre, and trifling Interest.

Having

Having thus given the World an hasty Sketch, of the Qualifications of the Members, I shall return to their Undertaking.

It would, I believe, be superfluous to dwell upon the Antiquity, and easie Method of teaching by Question, and Answer, since *Cicero*, in his *Tusculan Questions*, approves of it as the most useful, and ancient: And *Plato* practis'd it; nay, we find in the Tenth Chapter of the first Books of *Kings*, that the *Queen of Sheba*, went to prove *Solomon*, with hard Questions. I shall therefore say no more for the Proof of its Antiquity, since every one that considers it, must soon observe how much it will contribute to the improvement of Knowledge, when all the several Heads of the Nation, at least all those that love Enquiries, are busied to find out the most difficult, and least-understood things, for the Society to resolve, which could no other ways be effected, but by Quæries and Answers.

The Design being form'd into these methods I have describ'd, and the Society now establish'd, it was necessary, that they should have a certain time, and place of meeting together, for their mutual Conversation, but chiefly, for consulting altogether, on every Answer before it was permitted to be published: *Smith's Coffee-house*, for the convenience of its situation, in the middle way of all their Abodes, was the first place agreed on for this, and *Friday* the day; but, finding that House too public, by the great number that flock'd thither, on purpose to hear, and see the *Athenians*, that being appointed for the reception of all the Quæries, the Society thought fit, for the greater Privacy, to remove to some other place, since their Modesty never aim'd at their own Personal Glory in their Performances, as is evident by their concealment of their Names all along, with so much Regret to all those whose admiration of what they had writ, would not let them think it sufficient to converse only with their Papers.

There is such a desire of being known, in most Writers, that they all have that beginning of the first Copy of Verses in *Cowley* in their Heads

*What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the Age to come my own?*

that the Author of *The whole Duty of Man*, was almost the singular Example of Contempt of Nominal Fame, till this Learned Society put in for his Rivals in that noble Self-denial; yet neither can, with all their Humility, avoid that Reputation the World pays, even to themselves, since every one imitates the *Athenians* of old, erecting within their Minds Trophies to the unknown Worthies, as they did Altars, in their Temples to the unknown Deity. And Mr. *Swift*, in his Ode to this Society (printed before the Fifth Supplement) concludes very well;

—How strange a Paradox is true!
That men who liv'd, and dy'd without a Name
Are the chief Heroes in the sacred List of Fame.

But, tho' the World continue ignorant of the Names of these Gentlemen, yet it is highly sensible of the Advantages it has already, and is still likely to receive from their Performances, into which I shall now enquire.

There are no greater Enemies to Wisdom, and Learning, than vulgar Errors, and Superstition (if they will admit of a distinction, and are not the same) as long as the first remain, Men go upon a wrong Principle, rejecting all that may seem to oppose that, which they have received, and settled within themselves, as TRUTH, by so reverend, and awful an Authority, as Immemorial Tradition, which they look upon, as the diligent Observations of their Ancestors, a Name that has always been of too great a Veneration with most Ages, and by that has proved the irresistible Patron of an abundance of Absurdities, especially in Philosophy: And there is nothing more evident, than that no man can possibly arrive to any true, and sound Knowledge, till such false Guides are remov'd, which led him out of his way. I am confident, wherever the other prevails, there is not much likelihood of any considerable Progress in Wisdom; for, 'tis the Mist, or rather Night of the Mind, in which the Judgment wanders after the deceitful glimmerings of an *Ignis fatuus*, or else fears, and shuns every Light of Truth as such, knowing no medium betwixt these two Extreams. These Ills are indeed inseparable Companions; for, vulgar Errors always beget Superstition, and Superstition cannot subsist without vulgar Errors. One is the Tree, the other the Fruit: Vulgar Errors are the Springs which feed the Stream of Superstition, and till those are stilled, 'tis not to be expected, that will cease to flow.

This Learned SOCIETY seems to have been very sensible of this, by the great care they have taken, in consulting those erroneous Notions, which are commonly received, as often as they presented themselves in any of the numerous Quæries that have been sent them: And they have very well observ'd, that there are a great many omitted by the ingenious Dr. *Brown*, which are, in my opinion, as necessary to be remov'd, as any he has observ'd. I shall mention a few particulars, viz. That a Coal is to be found under a Plantane Root, at one time of the year, more than another: That these later Ages are more ignorant than their Predecessors, and that we find out no such useful Arts as our Forefathers have done. This the Society have very concisely, and clearly removed, which tho' I cannot omit, yet the Brevity I am confined to obliges me to contract: The most invincible way of Argument, is by Dilemma, which

which they have taken in the decision of this point, viz. 'The invention of *Useful Arts* is either *infinite* or *finite*; if the first, we must conclude (by Experience) that at length growing too numerous, some would be lost, and supplanted by others, which would not be, if the first were more useful: — If *finite*, they can be but once invented, and then our Ancestors have only the advantage of having lived before us; for the improvements that we see daily made on former Inventions, give us reason to believe, that if we had lived before them, we should have done no less. They prove farther, that none of those Inventions the World enjoys was found out by One, or at once. That the *Myrmecides* of *Ælian*, and *Pliny*, with his Ivory Chariot, with Horses, and all in so small a compass as to be covered by the Wings of a Fly, was outdone, in the Twentieth year of Queen *Elizabeth*, by *Marc Scalliot*, in his Chain of Gold drawn by a Flea, and his Lock and Key made of Steel, weighing but a Grain. And I must add, that the Ship of *Myrmecides* was outdone by a Gentleman of *Lyons*, who not only made one much less, but also gave a Motion to it. And for a further Proof, they refer us to the Transactions of the Royal Society.

'Tis a vulgar and general Error, that to deceive the Deceiver is no Deceit; which is very well remov'd in the Twentieth Number, and Tenth Question of the Second Volume. 'Tis a no less common Opinion, *That Men dream of things they never thought of*; which in the Seventeenth Number, of the Second Volume, and in the third Query, they confute in this manner. 'They deny it to be possible, unless in a *Divine Dream*, where both the Thing, and the Notion, should be revealed together. They grant, that the Fancy has Power to joyn things together, when they are before in the Mind, or to create Monsters, and *Chimeras* out of real things, sleeping, as well as waking. For example I have the Notion of my self, a Horse, a Road, Thieves, Water, Air, Fire, a House, Day, Night, or whatever else you'll name, treasured up in my Memory: These my Fancy may shuffle together, and so represent such Accidents as I never thought of in the Day-time. But they deny that there is any Imaginary Transaction that passes in our Sleep, but we have all thought of the several parts, and things which go to the composing of it, though perhaps not in the same order as there. For the Reader's farther satisfaction, let him consult the place above quoted, and there he will find full, and ingenious Arguments for a farther proof of this.

To run through all that they have observed in this nature, would make my Book swell beyond its designed bulk. I shall therefore pass over those curious Confutations of that Error, so commonly receiv'd, *That a dead Corps bleeds when touched by the Murderer*; which they have treated of, both in the

Second, and Sixth Volumes. I will not insist upon that Opinion, *That Osters are smooth one year, and rough the next*; and so *Vicissim*, in the Second Number of the Second Volume, which they deny. I have not room to repeat all those witty, and ingenious Arguments they produce to obviate that common Notion, *That a man cannot be twice in Love*, Vol. 2, Num. 6, and Query 3. for the ingenious discussion of which, as well as of many more, I must refer the Curious to their Works, only I cannot omit mentioning two, or three out of many which have a nearer relation to *Superstition*. 'Tis true, Dr. Brown has taken notice of most of these (tho' not all) but yet the Advantage to the Public is no less, than if they had been the original Remarks of the Society, since they communicate them to the many, who are most concerned in them, the Learned being generally now pretty free from those fordid Trifles.

Superstition is not only that supernumerary Formality, and ceremonious Observations in Religious Worship, but also that regard which too many have to pure Accidents, as the certain Heralds of *Destiny*: And this proceeds from our Fear, and Darkneß of a future state, the Ignorant, or Superstitious being unsatisfied in all Conditions of human Life; in Prosperity they either fear a Change, or hope an Encrease, and this Fear, and Desire pushes them on to seek, by some means, to know the Fortune, that is to attend them hereafter; and not content with their present Happiness, wreck their Peace with foolish and unnecessary Cares for to-morrow. And those in Adversity, unease under their Sufferings, with a great deal of willingness permit themselves to be flattered by hope of better things, but impatient in bare Expectation, without Certainty, they fly to *Superstition* for it, which gives them generally an ambiguous, and amusing Promise, and tho' it be as variable as the Oracles of old, they will all, like *Pyrrhus*, and *Cræsus*, interpret it to their own advantage, and indeed flatter themselves, that it so evidently complements their coming Success, it needs no Interpretation. That these vulgar Errors should carry away the Vulgar, is not so much to be wondered, because they build their credulous Faith upon *Hearsays*; but that the Ingenious, and Learned should be so far misled, who one would think regulate their Opinions according to the Rule of Reason, is very surprizing. Thus I cannot but wonder to find *Tycho Brahe*, running back to his House with no small consternation, and apprehension of an impending Evil, if the first thing in a Morning, he met an old Woman, or if an Hare cross'd the Path he was going, or any such trifling Accident that day confin'd him to his House, and perhaps it did him this Good, to pore upon his own new Systeme, with admiration, or in those of *Ptolemy*, and *Copernicus* with Contempt, and Anger.

* As Juvenal has it, — *Et genus humanum dæmonat caligine suri.*

Among that vast number of those superstitious Follies, which England abounds with several have been sent them, to wit, *Whether Crickets, Bats, Owls, Rats, Ravens, &c. are ominous; and how they come to know the fatal Events that are to come?* Because Dr. Brown has taken notice of them, I shall only instance in one, which that great man has not mentioned, and that is in the fourth Query, the ninth Number of the second Volume; *Whether there is any City of Time, wherein persons have extraordinary accidents, as to Fortune, and Misfortune?* Which general Error when they have at large confuted, they conclude very well; — *That he who acts without Reason, and believes things for which he can give no account at all, deserves to be excluded the Society of Rational Creatures.*

But of all these Superstitions, which the *Human* Desire of knowing our future Condition (in this life, not the next) has produced, there is none more pernicious, and of greater esteem and authority, than judicial *Astrology*, which because permitted (to the Scandal of Christianity) gathers the face of Lawfulness, and certainty with those, that are not sensible of the Tricks, and Deceits that are made use of by those that practise this pretended Art, and such as know not that it is as much against the Law of GOD, as that of Reason.

I am of opinion, that this Society has in nothing more contributed to the substantial Service of the *Empire*, than in undeceiving them in that point, since the Ladies are more generally carried away with the Belief in this pretended Knowledge, than men (not that I think my Sex free from the Contagion, or that it has reached all theirs) and have an implicit Faith in every

*Quædam
Discreti Astrologi prædixit
forte velatum Ammonia.
Juven. Sat. 6.*

*Astrologer, as the
Romans had in the
time of Juvenal, think-
ing all a fact, and
infallible, that he says,
Thus when they are
as the Scripture it self
solicitous, on the weighty affair of Mar-
riage, or the Death of a Husband, or other
Relation, or the Constancy of a Gallant,
they immediately repair to Oracles, Pa-
tridage, Gadbury, and the rest. What a ridi-
culous bustle was here, not many years ago,*

about *Le Croy*, the French woman that pre-
tended to this Insight into Futurity? And
how many every-day subtilties, like the King-
dom of the Devil, by these LYES? But,
the Society have beyond answer confuted
all the vain Pretences of these Impostors, in
the First Volume, and Sixth Number,
showing the Falsity of their Foundations,
by Reason, and their own Rules, and have
beside added some Reasons more familiar to
those, that are not skill'd in their Principles,
by the most obvious Inconsistencies in Na-
ture, which the meanest Capacities are
capable of judging of, and in the *Fourth*
Number, *Question the Fifth*, produce several
undeniable Texts of Holy Scripture, to prove
the unlawfulness of it. 'Tis with a great
deal of Reluctance that I omit the particu-
lars of their Arguments, because they are, in
my Opinion, the strongest and most cu-
rious I ever read on this Subject; but
Necessity obliges me to it, since it cannot
be expected, that I should give an Abridg-
ment of every Question, that is, well han-
dled in all the Six Volumes, that are alrea-
dy extant, because that would swell this
History to as great a bigness as all they have
writ, since they have been so short, and
close to the point in every one, that it is
impossible for me to be more concise, and
preserve the Force, and Beauty of their
Arguments.

Having thus shewn you how they have
destroyed these Enemies, that most oppos'd
the Growth of Knowledge, and Progress of
Wisdom, 'tis time that I lead you now to
a short view of some few of their former Per-
formances, in as many Sections as I am
able to bring in, within the narrow com-
pass, that remains of this *Second part*; but
considering the number of those admirable
Solutions I find both in Divinity, and Philo-
sophy, I am at a stand, how to proceed, for
the equality of their Worth, would engage
me in every one; so that I must only fol-
low my own Fancy in the Choice, not the
Merits of the Cause, which can be no Rule
where there is no difference.

To begin therefore with Divinity, out
of many of as great Excellence I take this,
which I find the Subject of the Tenth Num-
ber, of the Second Volume, and prosecuted
in the Supplement to the Fifth.

The sum of the Query, and Proof sent with it, is this:

*Whether Sin
might be ordained for*

*1. God's Honor,
and
2. the good of Mankind.*

*By the immutability of his
Nature, it is his will
that he should be
loved, and
equally rewarded.*

*Immortality.
Silver.
Justice.
Wisdom.
Mercy.
Love.*

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The Quærist having taken the *Affirmative*, the Society, with more Piety as well as Reason, take the *Negative*, the quite contrary following from the other, to what the Quærist would needs persuade: As; first, — It destroys God's *Wisdom*, true *Wisdom* consisting in chusing right, and just means, to attain a good End: but *Sin* is a bad means, forbidden by himself to Man for the best of Ends; and the Perfection of the *Creator* consists in imitation of his *Maker*: So that the making God the *Ordainer*, and *Cause* of *Sin*, is to make him guilty, and *Man* innocent; which could ne'r conduce to the manifestation of his *Wisdom*, but the contrary. Again, it destroys his *Justice*, for *Justice*, in respect of Punishment, always supposes a Subject capable of Rewards, and Punishments, and farther supposes a *Law*, by which he must judge, and distribute them, none of which can be if *Sin* be *absolutely ordained*, and *unavoidable*, and yet punished with eternal *Torments*, since all agree that absolute Necessity excuses any thing. — Father, Where is *Metz*, if God save a very few only (as some would have it) and punish all the rest of Mankind, for what they could not avoid? Nay, what he has forc'd them to commit? Then — Where's his *Dotiness*, and *Waste* of *Sin*, if he himself ordains, and causes it?

As to the second Branch of this Query — *Man's Happiness*, &c. 'tis as false as the other, if taken all together: That he had never died without *Sin*, is granted; but it follows not, that if he had not *died*, he had not been *glorified*, since like *Enoch* he might have been translated to *Glory*.

But to clear the first Branch of this Query a little farther; 'First, if God ordained not *Sin*, how came it into the World? 'Tis answered, — By *Permission*, God being not obliged to hinder it, but indeed obliged not to hinder it, if he would have, as he design'd, *Man* a free Agent, *Permission* having no Influence on a free Agent, it answers all these ends of the Quærist's Ordination, viz. the manifestation of his *Wisdom*, *Power*, *Justice*, &c. in raising *Man*, after his *Fall*, when penitent, and punishing him when finally impenitent. Besides, this Position of the necessity of *Sin*, takes away all *Sin*, and consequently makes the Supposition it self of God's ordaining *Sin* ridiculous, and impossible. Again, — If *Sin* were necessary, 'tis clear (from what has been said) there could be no eternal Punishment; but 'tis evident from the Word of God, that there is eternal Punishment, therefore &c.

Thus far the Tenth *Mercury*, of the second Volume, to which the Society, sending some Objections, not *Answers*, in the fifth Supplement, the same Member of this Society has delivered, and confuted them, with that evident, and convincing Demonstration, that

nothing in Nature can be more fine. The whole Dispute is too long to be here inserted, and too good to be clump'd into an imperfect *Abridgement*, for the Soul of the Argument spreads it self through every line, and is all in all, and all in every part; so that would do the Author of that incomparable piece, whom I honour, a great deal of *Injustice*, by giving so ill a Representation of his Performance: And I am sensible I shall scarce merit Pardon of him for what I have attempted in this kind above, therefore I must desire the Reader not to make a Judgment of the force of this Authors Argument, by what I have produced, since I only aimed to give such a View of them, as might invite those that should chance to see this rough Draught, to consult the Original, where they will find them in their Life, and Perfection: And I am pretty confident, that what I have inserted contains so much of its primitive Beauty, as to provoke an Ingenious Curiosity to pursue the end I proposed. But farther to enflame his Desire, I shall give some of those profound; and invincible Reasons that Discourse I mentioned in the fifth Supplement contains.

Some men are, of opinion, that there is no Science, worth studying, or at least satisfactory, but the *Mathematical*, because they carry such a visible demonstration along with them, In all their parts, that the Mind rests satisfied in the *Truth*, and *Certainty* of the Operation it has employed itself about. I will agree with them, that there is no greater, or more reasonable Inducements to read, or study, than *Evidence*, and high probability of arriving at *Truth*, else we wander in the dark, and spend our time in the pursuit of Shadows; and therefore I must recommend this Dispute to the perusal of every one that loves to converse with Demonstration in Argument, since there is nothing in the Mathematical Arts so self-evident, as this (out of many) — If Necessity excuses external Punishments (for that is the aim of the Proposing Arguments) what did Chrift die for? what Justice did he justify? what Benefits did he obtain? was he preserving us from eternal Death? for the Quærist says, there's no such thing, Necessity takes it away. Not saving us from temporal Death, for that we all suffer. Not from other temporal Punishments; for he owns the Good have them rather more than others. Is he a Saviour, to save us from nothing? It can't be from our Sins, because they are necessitated; nor from the Devil, because God has delivered us up to him, that he may compel us to *Sin*, nor to bring us to Heaven; since according to him all must go thither, nay, Judas, and all; nay, there's no other place for them to go to, and therefore they can't miss it. And how, I would fain know, does this manifest God's Wisdom, in the death of his SON, when at this rate it undeniably follows, that

For that is the necessary consequence of the Quærist's precedent Arguments; consult Num. 16, to 24. of the Supplement to the Fifth Volume, and this will be very clear.

that he died for nothing at all? Tho this be enough to shew, that what I have said is not without just cause, yet I cannot but add another from the same Discourse, it containing so much of Wit, as well as Solidity and Reason.

—If I conclude (says the Quaker) *Man's ways to be not of himself, whereby I may say, will, I can then the more easily excuse, say, love the worst of my Enemies.* — But (replies the incomparable Author) he might as well talk of a couple of Clocks loving, and forgiving one another; they are all wound up, and must necessarily strike on without any Choice of their own; they can neither hate, nor love according to his Notion, but are determined, or necessitated to do either.

—Does not the Doctrine of Free will (perfits the Quaker) set men together by the Ears? Nay, Perfection it self has a share in it, by persuading us that *Evil's ways are in themselves*, which makes it the more difficult to pardon them. This is so ridiculous an Argument, especially for him to advance, that holds the necessity of all our Actions, that the Author with a great deal of Justice presses it close to him, in the most sensible part of men of his Principle, I mean his temporal Interest.

—Why there's no help for't — (replies this Author) *so the World will still believe, and many a poor Pickpocket must suffer for it, whose Hand Fate shuffled into his Neighbor's Purse, and Neck in the Noose, before he was aware of it; nay, so necessarily, so irresistibly, that it is the biggest Folly in the World for him to seek to avoid it.* — However, would the Quaker himself but live up to this noble Principle, he would undoubtedly have all the Shop-lifts in Town his Customers, when at home, and all the Gentlemen of the Road his Attendants when abroad; for he could not in Conscience prosecute them, and have them hang'd for robbing him, which they could no more avoid, than he being rob'd. But, it seems, he's yet to learn, that there is Charity even in Justice, and that the Divine Being himself, as one of the Fathers says, is as merciful in building a Hell, as in framing a Heaven.

Here I cannot omit the *Millenium*, Volume the Fourth, Num. 6. tho I can say no more of it, but that it was done by the same Hand, and by consequence the Spirit, and Life, which abound in this I have touched upon, will be found in that Question; and this I can assure the Reader, he will find no small Pleasure in the perusal of it, there is such a clearness of Thought, and Expression, as well as greatness of Learning, and Reason, for he proves it from many places of Scripture, as well as the Testimony of the most ancient of the Fathers, that is of the first, and second Century, as *Papias, Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Clement*, and afterward *Irenæus, Lactantius, Tertullian, Methodius*, and still lower, *St. Cyprian, Nepos, Apollinarius*. Not that the words of all these Fathers are quoted in the *Mercury*, which would take up a

whole Volume, as the Author observes, but he affirms them to be of the same Opinion as *Justin Martyr*, and *Methodius* whose words he inserts.

I would also recommend those that are curious, in *Controversial Divinity*, to peruse what another Member of this Society has performed against the *Anabaptists* proving *Infant Baptism*, by the holy Scriptures, and primitive practice of the Church, beyond the weak, and ridiculous Efforts of his Adversaries to answer. For a confirmation of what I here avow, consult the fourteenth *Mercury* of the fourth Volume, the eighteenth of the same Volume, and the last twelve Numbers of the fifth Volume, where you'll find confirm'd what I have said, that this Society is composed of men of such general Learning, that each could finish the mighty Task alone; for this Controversie was carried on by the same who first began this Noble Design, and this I hope will prevent the Enemies of this Society from charging me with Flattery, when I shew such weighty Grounds for what I say.

Tho this be an Age that delights not much in Accounts of this nature, relating to Religion, yet I must so far trespass upon the Critics, as to add a word, or two, on their practical Behaviour, for there is not a greater Vein of Piety runs through all their Writings than in all their Actions, and their Endeavours to render other mens Actions of the like Perfection. And this will appear from their *Mercuries*, which endeavour'd with Reason, and Argument to second the Commands of the Government in the several admirable Papers which treat of the present designed Reformation; as Numb. 2. of the 2d Volume; where not only the reasonableness of bringing such a Reformation about is clear'd, but also Methods propos'd for the better effecting it: Though I believe neither they, nor indeed the Government, did ever imagine to bring it to that Perfection, that it should affect all Degrees, Sects, and Principles, for that is a moral Impossibility, yet they had reason to think it would have that *Use* upon most, that the Pious would not meet with such frequent, and open Objects of *Debauchery*, and *Prophaneness*, and that as as much Comfort to a Good man, as to a man of Sense to have a Fool silenced by Authority, who else would be continually prating. I know several have objected, that putting the *Laws in executing against Debauchery*, would but encrease the number of *Hypocrites*, but I shall not fear to answer, that *Hypocrisy* itself is better than *Scandal*, that being but a private and particular Ill, this general, that by borrowing the Face, and outward form of Virtue (and by consequence) makes some Attainment for its private Ills, by giving a (seeming at least) good Example; whereas *Scandal*, *sanctifies vice to every one*, and makes all appearances of *Virtue* ridiculous.

What

What can be more conducive to the general practice of Virtue than an able Assistance to those Sinners, who have a desire to be converted, but are with-held, by the Tyranny of an habitual Sin, which perhaps, as it is the greatest Obstacle to most of our pious Intentions, and the most difficult to overcome, so it bears down the good Resolutions of most men. Any one that has ever read St. *Austin's Confessions*, will easily perceive (if he be so happy to be free from personal Experience) how a *Habit clogs the Soul, and pins its Wings*, that it may not fly toward its Divine Creator, by the help of long abdicated Virtue. Oh how often did it tug, and pull back St. *Austin*, with a thousand worldly Considerations! How did it lay open all its gilded Baits, and struggle for a long time with the powerful Grace which God sent to his assistance! But as there is no corporeal Disease (if we believe some learned men) for which Nature has not provided a Cure, so much less is there any spiritual Malady, for which God has not provided an abundant Remedy, which our spiritual Physicians (at least those that value their Duty, and know the Obligation of their Character) apply to us as our several Disasters require. This the *Athenian Society* have done most admirably well in this difficult point of Habits. First, in discovering what a *Habit* is; and next, that it may be overcome, and lastly, the best Methods to do it: For the first two I refer the Reader to the first Number of the third Volume, and shall here only hint upon some of the Heads of the last; as — *An Habit always has its contrary, and may be broke by the use of those Methods which constitute its Contrary, or by removing the Occasions by which it is increased and continued.* As for example; 'A Fire is extinguished by Water, or by not supplying it with Fuel; for Drunkenness, Whoring, or Uncleaness, &c. the Cure is by practising the constitutive parts of Temperance, and Chastity; or else by flying Occasions, in these cases the *Partisan Discipline* is best, *Overcome by flying*; other Remedies are prescribed in the same place, as communicating ones Failings to a Friend, especially a Divine, whose Advice, and Prayers may not a little assist: And here the prescriptions must be observed unfeignedly; and not used as some do those of Doctors, flinging them away, tho they pretend to have taken them, since in spiritual Sickness, without taking the Medicine, there can be no Cure. As great a Step as can be made in this Affair is to get a true-informed Judgment, the Art of knowing things as they really are in their own Nature, and the business is almost done to their Hands.

This I have insisted the more upon, because it is of general use, and therefore, I hope, those who have a desire to take to the Paths of Virtue from a Habit of Vice, will consult the *Mercury* I have quoted, which will

not a little contribute to their Ease and Satisfaction.

Next to *Divinity* I shall place *Philosophy*, as approaching next in Dignity. Here their Performances have been no less extraordinary, as will appear from the beginning of their Undertaking, where the most difficult, and sublime things have met with a Resolution. In the very first *Mercury* we find no less than the *Eternity of the Soul* decided, &c. in the second, the cause of the Sea-spouts given, and the cause of saline quality of the Sea, &c. In the third, even the cause of the ebbing and flowing of the Sea.

This is a Question which has given a great deal of Fatigue to the learned of all Ages, and some will have it, that *Aristotle* died with Grief, because he could not find it out, others, that he flung himself into the Sea, saying, 'If I cannot understand thee, thou shalt contain me.' *Si non possum capere te, tu capies me.* The Opinions of it were as numerous as the Philosophers that handled it; to omit the rest, *Plato* held, that the *Flux* and *Reflux* proceeded from certain Gulphs in the bottom of the Sea, which like *Squirrels* suck'd in the Water first, and then spouted it out again. *Apollinus Tyaneus* (who was extremely well-skilled in *Spirits*, if we believe *Philostratus*, in the Life of that Philosopher) will needs have it, that certain *Spirits*, at the bottom of the vast Deep, are continually puffing, and blowing, which gives motion to the Waves, and causes the ebbing, and flowing. Others held, that there were some Fires under the Waves, which made it boil like a Pot, and that when that Fire went out, the Sea ebb'd. Some of equal Absurdity, think the Sea to be (or rather contain) a great Animal, and that as it turns, and moves from side to side, it causes the ebbing and flowing. There have not been a few that have held the Moon to be the efficient cause of this Motion: Others (among which number, if I mistake not, *Galileus* is Chief) are of opinion, that the *Sun*, as it gives Motion to the other parts of the World, causes this Revolution of the Waters, tho they be but a part of that Globe we call the Earth, and therefore would not be supposed to have a different, or at least a peculiar motion to themselves, from the same Cause, supposing that the *System* of *Copernicus* is true of the diurnal Motion of the Earth.

There is another Opinion built upon this *System*, which is this: That the diurnal Revolution of the Earth, upon its own Axis, is the only cause of the Flux, and Reflux of the Sea; for as other Waters, that are conveyed in Pipes, will rise to as great a height as the place from whence they first descend; so these of the Sea, upon the descent (if we can term any part of that Motion so, which has an equal reference to, and distance from the Center) of the Earth flow down, as far

as the Shore permits, but being there stop'd, rebound up again as much the other way; which is the ebb, and flowing. But this is no less absurd than any of the rest I have interted; for, first, if this were the cause, there could be no such variety of Tides, as is well known, since the Earth turns upon its own Axis, in an equal space of time, as well as with an equal, even, and constant motion, without any rub: So that we are to seek in the most difficult part of this wonderful motion still: For, How comes it to pass, that the Tide flows some fathoms more in some places than in others, and that constantly, and therefore not caus'd by any accidental Wind driving in upon that Shore? But there remains, as great a difficulty as to the cause of the seven times flowing of the *Emrys* in a day. Lastly, if there be such a descent in the motion of the Earth, as to make the Waters fall down to the brim, as I may call it, then by the same Rule, they would fall out when that part of the Globe came, to be perpendicular downward; for, if there be a descent, there must be a lowest part of that descent, and then what I have urg'd would infallibly follow. 'Twould be endless to run through all the Absurdities of this last, as well as those of the other opinions I have related, which might well follow, when they never consider'd all the Consequences of the Doctrine they advanc'd. The Society, in their third Mercury, decides the Question with more Reason, and Certainty, in this manner. — "What is the reason of the Sun's motion, but the necessary Law of the Creation, or the first established Order of Nature? For; had the Sun been fixt in any one part of the Element, the opposite part of the Earth would have been burnt up, and all the rest frozen, and consequently the whole Globe of Earth rendered incapable of fructifying. And as the motion of the Sun was necessary in the Order of Nature, for all those Beings that depend upon it, so it was equally necessary that the Sea should have a particular Commission, or Order, from its Creator, (the only efficient Cause) for a *Flux*, and *Reflex*, else it would have stagnated, and corrupted, and by consequence unfit for *Procreation of Fishes*, and Navigation. For the Objections which are or can be rais'd against this, consult the *Mercury*, and there you will find them answered to your full satisfaction.

But if you require some more immediate cause of this Motion of the Waves. Vol. 5; Numb. 6, Quest. 2, refers you to an ingenious Book, writ by a Member of the Society, call'd, *The Fishes of Souls before they enter into the Body*; and in the 2^d Dialogue of that Book you will find your Curiosity answered in a most witty and surprizing manner, I must needs say, the whole Book is an extraordinary Piece of refined Notions, entertaining Wit, and great, and well-digested Learning, and indeed, too much above the Capacities of most of our English Readers, to

sell well; for if it were but understood, I am confident; nothing that this Age has produced would be more grateful to the Curious: And if it were translated into French, that Nation would value it, and be sensible, that the English had as noble, and speculative a Genius, as any of them; but the Humour of most men, and some that pretend a little to sence, is to give censure of a thing, according to the Vogue, tho' they never saw it themselves, tho' perhaps (as I am sure in this case is true) that proceeded from the Ignorant, (which being the more numerous, make up the Cry) or those at least who did not understand it.

But what can be more fine than their Discourse upon *Individuation*? A point confess'd by the great Mr. Boyle (as they observe) of the most nice, and difficult nature. I shall transcribe it, because there can be no Abreviation so well done, but it must be an Injury to its Excellence.

The Question is this: — *What is Individuation, or wherein consists the Individuability of a thing?*

It may n't be improper (pursues the Author, for I omit the Preface of it, which is a kind of an Apology, because I think it needs none) to run through the different Orders of visible Beings, and search them all for a distincter Idea of it [than the Schools afford.] To begin with those Species of Body, which are not properly organized, and have neither Life, nor Sense, as Stones, Metals, &c. in these Individuation seems to consist in nothing but greater, or lesser: Take the less part of a Stone away, you may still call it the same Stone: Like an equal part with the Remains, that Individuation ceases, and they are two new Individuals: Divide a Stone, &c. as long as you please, every part of it will be a Stone still, another individual Stone, as much as any in the Mountains, or Quarry 'twas first cut out of, even tho' reduc'd to the minutest Sand, or, if possible, a thousand times less. But when we take one step farther, and proceed a degree higher, to the Vegetable Kingdom, the Case is far otherwise, and indeed Nature seems to be still more distinct, and as it were careful in its Individuation, the higher it rises, till at last it brings us to that great Transcendental Individual, — the only proper uncomponded Essence, — the One God blessed for ever. To return to Plants, — their Individuation consists in their singular form, contecture, and order of their Parts, whereby they are disposed for those uses to which Nature has designed them, and by which they receive and maintain their Beings. For example, a Tree, from whence tho' you take the Branches, it grows, receives Nourishment from the Earth, maintains itself, and is still a Tree; which the parts thereof are not, when separated from the rest; for we can't say every part of a Tree is a Tree, as we can of a Stone, every part of a Stone is still a

Scene. But now, — if this Tree be cloven in two, or more pieces, or feld by the Roots, this *Concurrence*, or *orderly Relation* of the Parts each to other, ceases; its *Essence*, as a Tree is destroy'd, its *Individuation* perishes, and 'tis no more a Tree, but a Stump, or a piece, or pieces of Timber. Let's proceed a degree higher to merely *sensible Creatures*, who are not so immediately depending on *Earth*, the common Mother, as *Plants*, nor rooted to it, and as it were a part of it, as they are, but walk about, have, in respect of that, an *Independent Existence*; and are a sort of Worlds by themselves: And here the *Individuation* consists in such a particular *Constitution* of their *Essential Parts*, and their relation one toward another, as enables them to exert the Operations of the sensible, or animal Life. Thus cut off the Legs, or any other parts of an Animal, 'tis the same Animal still; but cut off its Head, or take away its Life, and 'tis no longer that individual Animal, but a meer Carcass, and will by degrees resolve into common matter again, or rather be transmigrated into some other form. To ascend now to the highest Rank of *visible Beings*, the Rational; the Individuation of Man appears to us, to consist in the Union of that *thinking Substance*, which we call the Rational Soul, with any convenient Portion of *silly-organiz'd Matter*, we hope 'tis no Heresy to assert, that any *Portion of Matter* duly qualified, and united to the Soul by such a Union, as we experience, tho' we cannot well explain, is immediately individuated by it, and together with that Soul, makes a *Man*: So that if it were possible for one Soul to be clothed over and over, at different times, with all the Matter in the *Universe*, it would in all those distinct shapes be the same *Individual Man*. Nor can a man be supposed, in this case, to differ more from himself than he does when he's an Infant, and just past an *Embryo* from himself, when of Adult, or decrepit Age; he having in that time changed his Portion of Matter over, and over; has been fat, and lean, sick, and well, lost by Bleeding, Excrement, Perspiration, &c. gained again by Aliment, and perhaps not one Particle, or but very few of the *First Matter*, which he took from his Parents, and brought with him into the World, now remaining.

How noble, and how abstruse a Question is here handled with the greatest Brevity and Perspicuity in the World! How knotty a Point render'd easy to any tolerable Understanding, without losing one jot of its majesty or profoundness!

Here I should add that admirable delineation of the nature of *Opium*, Vol. 6, Num. 4, Quest. 4. done by the *Physician*, and that of the fam'd *Talismanical Science*, Num. 7, Vol 5, and of *Specific Remedy*, and also the Questions about several indifferent Matters; *Hate of the Angels, Scissim, Equivocal Generation*

monsters, Transfusion of Blood, Muscular Motion in Lunatics, Mutation, Circulation, and Abduction. And the first Question of the 9th Mercury of the 5th Volume, about *Navigatation*, all incomparably and concisely done by the same hand; but that I have already transgressed my Bounds, and I should injure these excellent Performances by abbreviating them, that of *Navigatation* not being capable of being made one single word shorter than it is in the *Mercury*.

Tho' 'tis impossible for me to run through all those Questions in Philosophy, which this *Learned and Ingenious Society* have handled with equal Excellence, yet I cannot but recommend the several Discourses relating to the Soul of Man; for, in their Volumes already publish'd, they have discuss'd all that can any way relate to it. The Quæries I shall here insert, which, I question not, will invite every curious Enquirer to consult the Answers, which are extraordinary.

1. Whether the Soul be eternal, or præ-existent from the Creation, or contemporary with its Embryo.

See Vol. 1. } V. 1. 1. } this is very
Numb. 1. } N. 6, 12. } well an-
Quæry 2. } Q. 1, 3. } swered.

2. Transmigration of Souls. — V. 1. N. 7. Q. 6.

3. Is the Soul subject to Passion? — V. 1. N. 8. Q. 9.

4. What are the Souls of Brutes? — V. 1. N. 9. Q. 2.

5. Whether the Soul of Man knows all things to come, but is hinder'd by the dulness of bodily Organs? — V. 1. N. 26. Q. 10.

6. In what condition is the Soul of an Infant, as to its natural Faculties? and what sort of Thoughts of the things it sees, and hears, may it be supposed to have? — V. 1. N. 2. Q. 13.

7. Whether Souls separated by Death from the Body, retain their Individuation; or are all turn'd into one common soul? — Ibid. Q. 12.

8. In what part of the Body is the Soul? — V. 2. N. 1. Q. 13. & N. 7. Q. 2. & N. 29. Q. 5.

9. What defect is there in the Souls of Persons born Natural? — V. 2. N. 2. Q. 4.

10. What are we to think of the Definition of the Soul — that it is the first Act of an Organical Body having Life in Power? — V. 2. N. 2. Q. 7. * Actus primus corporis organici, in potentia vitam habentis.

11. Whether Women have any Souls? — V. 2. N. 3. Q. 11. To which I join this; Is the Soul of Woman inferior to the Soul of Man? If so, will that superiority continue eternally? — V. 5. N. 3. Q. 2.

12. Whether the immortal Soul was breathed into Adam with the Animal, or, before, or after? — V. 2. N. 5. Q. 17.

13. Upon a bare relation of any thing, an Idea of the thing related is at the same time represented to the Imagination, but when we speak of God or the Soul, we have none at all. — The reason of this? — V. 2. N. 7. Q. 9.

14. Whe-

14. Whether our Souls, going out of our Bodies, pass into any local circumscribable place; or, whether they assume certain Vehicles, or subtle Bodies, retaining the same characterizing forms, which their terrestrial Bodies had? — V. 2. N. 7. Q. 3.

15. Whether the separated Souls have any knowledge of Affairs in this World, &c. Ibid. Q. 5.

16. Whether separated Souls know one another, since they have not the Organs of Seeing, Hearing, Speech. Ibid. Q. 6.

17. Where do Souls go immediately on their separation from the Body? Ibid. Q. 7. & 8. and V. 3. N. 25. Q. 7. and V. 4. N. 29. Q. 1. V. 2. N. 7. Q. 10.

18. Whether has a Man three Souls, or no, viz. the Supreme, which they call the Mind; the Sensitive, which they call an Image; and Rational, which lies, and knits the other two together? — V. 2. N. 7. Q. 9.

19. What have the Philosophers (guided only by natural Reason) conceiv'd by the future state of the Soul? Ibid. Q. 11.

20. How are we to understand the Union of the Soul and Body, since the Soul is pure immaterial Substance, and the Body a gross organized Substance? Ibid. Q. 12. & Vol. 3. N. 15. Q. 11.

21. Whether the Soul of Man be a Transfusion, or an immediate Infusion; if the former, what tolerable Exceptions may we have of the way and manner of a Bodies begesting a Spirit? If the latter, how comes it to be defil'd with original Sin? V. 2. N. 16. Q. 15. In relation to this, see also Num. 22. of the same Volume, where several Objections about this are very well answer'd.

22. Whether all Souls are equally happy in Heaven? V. 3. N. 8. Q. 5.

23. Whether the Soul of a Child that dies after it is quick in the Womb, be happy, or miserable eternally? Ibid. Q. 6.

24. Whether the Souls of Ignorant and learned men, are more perfect in the World to come than the Souls of the Ignorant, and Literate, &c. V. 3. N. 25. Q. 8.

25. Where is the Soul of Man, when in a Sworn? — V. 3. N. 29. Q. 1.

26. Whether the Soul, after Death, be in an active or inactive state, during its subsistence without the Body? — V. 4. N. 28. Q. 5.

27. Whether the Soul can be absent from the Body for a limited time, without Death, provided the Body remain inextinguishable? — Ibid. Q. 6.

28. Is the cause of Death, or a separation of the Soul from the Body, in the Soul, or in the Body? — Ibid. Q. 7.

29. Whether the Soul does always actually think, or no? — V. 6. N. 6. Q. 2.

There are other Questions relating to the Soul, which I have not set down in this place, the Brevity I am confin'd to not only denying me that, but also room to make any mention of what other Philosophical Questions they have answer'd. I must there-

fore desire the Reader to supply this defect in me, by consulting their general Index, which will be publish'd suddenly in an alphabetical order, as they have given public notice; there they will not only find what I have omitted, but also all other Questions relating to the Mathematics, Physic, Law, Criticisms, Anatomy, and all the other Branches of their Promise of answering all manner of Questions in every Science, and Art, if of any Use, or Advantage, general, or particular; for, I shall only here give a short Direction to two or three in each Science. For Mathematical Questions therefore consult Vol. 1. N. 5. Q. 5. & N. 15. Q. 3. of the same Volume, and Num. 4. Q. 7. of the Sixth Volume. For Physic see V. 1. N. 15. Q. 5. where is the original cause of the Gout. See farther, V. 5. N. 7. Q. 2. & Q. 4. of the same Number. Anatomy in general is well improv'd, since Hippocrates learnt it of Democritus in the Suburbs of Abdera, from the dissection of Brutes gathering the Anatomy of Man, at the same Hippocrates testifies in his Letter to Demagoras: And I am confident, that by the Answers this Society have given in this Art, (which is a part of the Delphic Precept of Know thy self, which therefore is the reason, I suppose,

Juvénal says it must be kept in Heaven) will make any impartial Judge sensible of their Ability in that as well as the rest of the Sciences, for your own satisfaction, see Vol. 1. N. 23. Q. 6. & Vol. 2. N. 12. Q. 6. and several other places, where the most curious thing in this Art are discov'rd. For Law, see V. 1. N. 5. Q. 7. & V. 1. N. 18. Q. 12. and a great many other places. For Criticisms, V. 1. N. 21. Q. 7. & 9. and other places in the Sixth Volume.

I am sure the Wits will think it high time for me to dismiss these grave, and sublimer Subjects, and to come nearer their Province; for I am sensible that Theology, and Philosophy require too much of Thought, and too much strength of Judgment, to be Entertainment agreeable to that airy Genius, which relishes nothing but a trifling Jest, a Quibble, or at most a pleasant Banter, as they call it. These Gentlemen are so wholly possessed with the Spirit of Gaiety, that they think all things dull that are not so; 'tis very hard, they will never give us leave to be serious, under the severe Penalty of their Displeasure at our Performances. But that they may have no cause to think I have quite forgot them, if they will be so complaisant to meet me half way, and give for once a step or two from their eternal Banter, to cross Wit, I will now descend to gratifie these partial, and unimpartial Judges of Wit, and Learning, and show them, that the Athenian Society do sometimes unbend from their sterner Studies, to make a grateful mixture of the pleasant with profitable, that they might not give the least cause to any to think their Endeavours any way imperfect: But they make not a Business of a Delight, or think, that the Life of a man

man of *Sence*, and *Reason*, should be taken up with no higher Contemplation, than the continual view of the lighter Performances of *Wit*. This I must inform these Gentlemen, that they'll seldom find any of these easier Elays of this *Society* without a just mixture of *Learning*, for that is so much a Part of them, that it gives a lasting Beauty to their very Diverfions. I shall instance in one particular, which some (I am pretty sure without consideration) have been pleas'd to exercise their unintelligible Talent of Banter upon, I mean the Answer to this *Query*; *Whether Fleas have Stings, or whether they suck or bite when they draw Blood from the Body?* This *Query*, we may see by the Author, was sent by one of the fair Sex, and the Resolution is compos'd not only of true Wit, all the *Similes* being *ex re nata*, not dragg'd from all the corners of the Universe, to be cram'd in by Head and Shoulders, as those of some men are, who have not gain'd a little Reputation by them, but also of a curious enquiry into the form, and parts of that little, and domestic Animal, which tho' so common, yet of so wonderful a composition. This I find the first *Query* of the 15th Number of the first Volume; which if any true Judge of Wit will consult, I question not but he will with a great deal of readiness subscribe to what I have said of it, and only blame me for the Modesty of my Expression. In the very next Mercury you will meet with a no less entertaining Discourse on this *Query*; *Whether Beauty be real, or imaginary?* The *Query* is nice, but the Answer is incomparably fine. Farther, let the Reader peruse the third, the thirteenth, the fifteenth, and sixteenth Numbers of the second Volume: The Subject of the two last I cannot pass over in silence. (1) *Whether it be lawful for a young Lady to pray for a Husband?* (2) *A Lady desires to know when she shall have a Husband.* (3) *Is it better to live single, or marry?* are the three *Queries* propos'd in the sixteenth Number, which are answered with that Ingenuity, and Reason, (an Ingredient seldom found in the Gallinosecries our Scriblers generally dress out for public view) that it cannot but bring the extremeest satisfaction to any one that pretends with any Justice to value himself as a man of Wit, and Sence. The first *Question* of the sixteenth Number I shall say no more of, but that the Reader may see, that as it is of the same nature with the first in the former Number, so it appears to possess the same Authority. See farther in this kind Num. 4. and the 12th of the third Vol. and Num. 3. & 12th of the fourth Volume; and several places I have omitted in each Volume.

In the fifth, and sixth Volumes I find the *Society* endeavouring a sadder *diversion* of the *Wit*, by several Essays in *Poetry*, in answer to *Queries* sent them in Rhime; this being indeed the necessary result of their first Poem, of answering all manner of *Questions*. In this, as well as in all their other Per-

formances, the *Society* propose to themselves the Service of Religion, and I hope the *Wit* will not wholly condemn them for pretending to *Poetry*, and *Pity* at once, since tho' *Quarles* has scandaliz'd a Devotion with *wretched Verse*; yet *Beaumont's Elisee*, &c. that admirable Poem *Spencer's Fairy Queen*, designed an Encomium on all the noble train of Virtues; the *Steps to the Temple*, and other Verses of *Crafton*, who was commended by the incomparable *Cowley*; nay, the *Plagues of Egypt*, the Paraphrase on *Isaiah*, and other Pindarics of *Cowley* himself shew, that *Poetry* is never so elevated, and fine, as when employed on Subjects of that nature: Nay, *Virtue* is so far from not being the proper Subject of *Poetry*, that nothing else, indeed, is; For, if we believe the best of Poets, and Critics, and examin the Rules laid down by them for both *Dramatic*, and *Epic Poessie*, we shall find, that the aim, and end of the first, is to reward *Virtue*, and punish *Vice*; and the business of the latter is, not only to draw its Characters truly virtuous, but to make them successful, as the Piety of *Aeneas* (and most, if not all of his *Trojan Companions*) in *Virgil*, of *Godfrey of Bulloign*, *Tancred*, and *Rinaldo*, &c. in *Tasso*, of *David*, *Judasbas*, &c. in *Cowley*, may satisfy: So that I have reason to conclude, that that Poet, who pretends to write without this Aim, is either ignorant in his Art, or guilty of perverting its sacred Laws. All this

being thus evident, the more equal Readers will, I question not, be very well pleas'd, when they see this *Society* in their Poetical Mercenary, in lost Numbers presenting a formal Challenge to *Vice*; and as two Opposites are best distinguish'd when set together, so here a *Virtue* in one Column, and its contrary *Vice* in another, must render the first as odious, as it really is, and enhance, if not the Beauty, yet the Efficacy of the latter. To perform this with the more force, and majesty, the *SOCIETY* have, with a great deal of Reason, made choice of *Spencer's Starveling*. This new Project for the promotion of Religion is confin'd only to one *Virtue*, and one *Vice* at a time, that the other half of the Paper may be free to answer such *Queries* that are sent them in Verse, as shall any way merit to be taken notice of.

Before I dismiss this point, I think myself oblig'd to make some Remarks on the *Poetry* this *Society* have already gratified the World withal, because some, that with no little Ardour aspire to the name of Critics, have been pleas'd to pass none of the most favourable Judgments upon it: I confess indeed these Sparks are not so kind, as to give us any Reason for their Procedure in this Affair, or to discover those Defects they have

For the Character of Rinaldo is virtuous, notwithstanding his Amour with Armida, which was the effect of her Enchantments more than his Inclinations; his Repentance of this falling, his Prayer on Mount Olivet, before his attacking the Enchanted Forest, and the rest of his Actions, justify my placing him in this Number.

have found out, supposing that their *Arbitrary* Sentence is sufficient to prove a Fault; perhaps that may be of great value with those who blindly depend upon their Judgment, but we that are so arrogant to believe an *ipse dixit* no proof, must take the liberty to question their *Decision* as very partial.

I wish these mighty Critics had given us some Standard for the Excellence of Copies of Verses, or had rang'd them under some of the known Heads, nay tho they had ran as far as the Division of ** Plate*; for then I could with the more ease have made an examination of them, and have obviated those Objections, they had made, But when Men speak at random, without giving any reason for what they say, it is sufficient to be as positive in our denial as they were in their affirmation, 'tis not, being as convincing as it is.

But to shew the World that I am not afraid to bring the Poetry of the Society to the Test, I shall, according to what Standard I shall think *Just* (since they have given me none) examine it, with that impartiality which becomes not only an Historian, but a Critic. Every one that has ever essay'd any thing in Verse cannot but be sensible of the difficulty of bringing every part to that *decorum* which is necessary for the beauty, and per-

** Ut in vita, sic in oratione nihil est difficile, quam quid debeat videri: utrum appellamus Græci, nos decorum.*

Hujus igitur oratione non modo in vitas sed sepius in Poemate, & Oratione peccatur.

fection of that way of writing, without which as *Cicero* observes, there are not a few faults break into *Poese*, as well as *Prose*. What this necessary *decorum* is may be gather'd partly from ** Horace* in his Art of Poetry, to avoid Obscurity, Trifling, Obscurity, *meaness* both of thought, and expression, and affected copiousness, which is a spinning out a Thought into various, and synonymous Expressions, and this last *Claustrum* is very much given to, notwithstanding the Character *Scaliger*, gives him.

** Brevis esse laboro Obscurus fio, sectantem levis nervi Deficiente, Animique profusus grandia turges, scripsit, non itaque nimium, simulatque procella. Qui variare cupit rem prodigat, ut mihi, Delphicum sit vis appingit, stultibus aprum.*

If we can't find the Society guilty of any of these faults I think (by so good an Authority as *Horace*) we may conclude their Poetry excellent at without any just reason. But I shall confine my self to one Copy of Verses which was win-

cal genius shines all through them, the thought and expression admirably match'd like a Noble Sculpture a beautiful Body, nay something nearer a kin to each other, and nearer of a Nature: but before I say more of them I'll transcribe 'em, which will not I am sure be ingrateful to the Reader.

*Te by each Fountain, River, Stream, and Grove,
By all the pleasant Haunts the Muses Love,
By them themselves, and great Apollo too,
I'll swear I hardly love them more than you.*

*Say dear unknown, what is't that charms me so?
(flow?)*

*What sweet Nectar through thy Lines does flow?
What Deathless Beauties, in thy Garden,
(grow?)*

*Immortal Wit, in Nature's easiest dress,
A Paradise rais'd in a Wilderness.*

*Too harsh thy Subjects, Haggard, and unkind,
And rough, in bitter Blasts of Northern Wind,
Thy divine Spirit, corrects each vulgar sound,
And breaths delicious Zephyrs all around.*

*Thus can our Kindred Art, and Painters Care
Make even Storms, look beautiful and fair.*

*But whilst I praise, I must accuse thee too,
When thou hast done so much, no more to do.
When so the break of Boyne thy Hero came
There to break off the Chafe of Him and Fame.
Where hadst thou Albion now, hadst been his food,
But floating in another Sea of Blood?*

*To leave him when the Elvads crept soft along
And Silver Boyne listned to bear thy Song,
To bear the Naiads sing, when thou dost write
As when she rose to see thy Hero fight:*

*See him, all ore with Springing Laurels, spread
And all his Angel Guard around his Head.*

*This wields his flaming Sword—the Rebels fly;
And That, the fatal Ball puts gently by.*

*Which Britains Mighty Centurion shook to
(see)*

And trembl'd at the danger more than He.

*Thou, sweetest Bard, hadst thou proceeded sung
How had the Woods, how had the Valleys
(rang!)*

*And Pollio's learned Muse, who sits above
The Shepherd's admiration, and their Love,*

*Had design'd thee Smiles, as all the World
(Esteem,*

Which doubt not sure dislike what pleases him.

What can be more fine, and sweet than these Verses? What more poetical? What more correct? and if at any other time their Poetical *inspiration* come not up to these, there are several reasons for it. First, because several Questions sent in Verse, which would be more to the purpose in Prose, for there are subjects not so proper for Verse. 2dly, Because they design'd 'em otherwise, as for example *Bartholomew*, as the first Query of the 1st Number of the 5th Volume, which in its kind is very witty, and pleasant; and the 6th of the same *Mercury*. But then there are the Answer to the 4th Query, and the *Epithalamium*, very fine; and Lastly, when

the subject is not so Noble; as that of this, which merited no less, than the Society has said of it. I cannot omit an Epigram I find in the 5th Number of the 7th Volume, which is this,

(Here follows)
Whatever Borrow'd Lines our Works
Thou Wd'st swear that thine are all thy own.

I find scarce one in *Marialis* comparable to this, except, *Palatæ Cinnæ vultu videtur, & est pauper*. *Marialis* too often playing upon words, which tho' more tolerable in Latin, than English, yet I cannot bring my Palate to relish. The Virtues of an Epigram are, *audacitas*, *Shortness*, and an *Acumen*, which is the Soul, Life and Spirit of an Epigram, without which 'tis flat, and insipid, nor can I endure a long Introduction to that, which lies within the narrow compass of a word, or two; the Wit of these being not sufficient to recompense the tediousness of the other, nor could I 'till I saw this ever, with patience admit of any thing of that kind in English.

Upon the whole I think that Character which *Julianus Cæsar Scaliger* gives of *Clodius*, is justly the due of the Poetical Member of this Society, viz.

* In lib. 4. *Heritæ*.
Narcissus, *æstiva*
Claudius, *æstiva*
gignens, *ignobilis*
oppressus, *audacis*
ingenio, *quarum* *Dactyl*
metria. *Palatæ* in
eo *Calor*, *cultus* non
involuit, *temperatum*
judicium, *audacis* *con-*
didit, *Narcissus* non *af-*
fectu *acutæ* *dicit*
multa, *sine* *ambitione*.
Tho' I do not understand with what Justice *Scaliger* urges, the Ignobleness of his Subjects or Argument when all he has writ, is upon the noblest, as Gods, Princes and Consuls.

All I have to add in this point (because I have not room for a long Critical discourse on Poetry) is that they have not only attain'd all the Beauties of Verse, but have also had in their eye the very end, and aim of Poetry, which

* 1. *Aut prodesse*
voluit, 2. *id est de-*
lectare *Poeta*, *ut ait*
Simul & honoris, &
juvando *dicitur* *scribere*.

* *Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci*.

Horace divides into three parts, Pleasure, Profit, and both together: But he concludes that it to be the best, which comprizes both the pleasant, and the profitable. Some one of these ends if not all are observable in every Poetical Mercury I have yet seen. In fine, I think; the opinion of one that was so much a Poet as to be Author of those Latin Verses in the 13th Numb. of the 6th Vol. is a sufficient defence of their Abilities in Poetry, since he, that cou'd write so well must be a competent judge.

I shall conclude this second Part of this

History, with a defence of their Complaisance for the Fair Sex in Answering their Queries, which has been extremely relented by the Wits, and other Emulators of the Society, who have themselves in the 13th Number of the 3d Volume, obviated the main Objections of these Sparks, that hate the Fair Sex, because they are their slaves I believe, and 'tis pity they are not so generous to let their Names to their Queries, that the Ladies might know their haters. In the Mercury I mention'd, there is this Query sent them — "Whether it does not weaken the Credit of the *Asheban Mercury*, that the Authors of it descend to such a pitty-ful Employment, as to take notice of Female Infirmities? To which the Society answer, — That they are troubled with ten, perhaps an hundred Masculine Impertinencies for one Feminine. (They might have added this Query to the Number) Whereas on the other side they have Letters from the Ladies, without the boasted advantages of Learning, which are of so great concern, and carry so much weight, that they dare not, without considerable Time, and Thought, attempt their Answer. The Society proceeds farther in the same Mercury in this manner, — For meddling with Questions of Love, Courtship, and Marriage, we might say, we designed thereby to mingle the Dulce, and the Utile. and a little farther, — But we scorn to excuse what needs it not, but rather ought to be Gloried in, since 'tis some things of this nature, may be, pure Matters of Gallantry, yet there are very many Questions, which not only have an influence, on the happiness of particular Men, and the peace of Families, but even the good, and welfare of larger Societies, and the whole Commonwealth; which consists of Families, and single Persons.

Tho' this is sufficient to justify their answering the Ladies Queries, to any moderate, and considering opposer, yet lest the rest shou'd imagine that I beg the Question, and that I take that for granted, which they deny. I shall waive the Word of this Society, that they have received several weighty Queries, &c. from them, and prove by undeniable Examples both of the present, and the past Ages, that the Women have as Nice a sense of things, and as good Judgments too, as most Men. 'Tis true, that here in England, the Women are kept from all Learning, as the prophane Vulgar were of old, from the Mysteries of the Ancient Religions; and therefore, are not generally so agreeable, in Conversation, to Men of Parts, and Sense, because, a new Dress, Dance, Play, &c. is all they can discourse of, tho' this is far from holding ev'n here in England through all, for there are a great many, who in spite of the Tyranny of Custom, will steal some Minutes from the Needle, to improve their Minds, and this Society, without doubt, will with their performances invite a great many more, to the same, when they shall see the Beauties

Beauties of Philosophy, in so sweet, and easie a Dress, and then their Conversation would be far more agreeable to the wiser part of the World, than the impertinent Chat, too many (not by their own fault) are now guilty of. This is evident to any man, that has ever been in France, and convers'd with the Women of the better quality there, whose Apprehensions are more quick, and discourse upon any Subject, or in any Science, I will not except the most profound parts of Philosophy, more *à propos*, and ingenious, than the Men; their Wit, and Notions are indeed extremely surprizing. I am confident, by the acquaintance I have had the honor to have with some of the Refin'd of that Sex here, that our English Women would not be inferior to them in any qualification of the Mind, if they were bubbled with as happy an Education: Nay, I am apt to think, they would as far surpass the French Ladies in Knowledge, as in Beauty.

The entertaining Notions of Philosophy, are not the only Subjects of the Ladies Studies in France, *Madam de Maintenon* will prove, that the weighty movements of State-affairs are not above the direction of that Sex: And she that writ the *Memoirs of the Court of Spain* shews, that they are capable of making politic Observations on the nicest Occurrences. *Madam Dacier* is an extraordinary Proof, that the most crabbed Studies are not look'd into by them, without the greatest success. Her Endeavours on *Plautus*, *Terence*, and *Horace*, shew, that Women are capable of being as nice, and critical Judges of Sense, and Learning, as Men; nay, those Essays I have mention'd of this French Lady, excel all that has been done in that kind, particularly all the Pedantic Labors of those plodding Jesuits who have publish'd Notes upon the *Classic Authors*, for the use of the *Dolopon*. I am not ignorant, that some will urge, that she was beholden to her Husband, for those upon *Horace*; yet these Gentlemen cannot deny, that *Plautus*, and *Terence* were publish'd when she was yet *Madam la Faveur*.

I cannot but mention the Lady *Donna Oliva Sabuco*, reckon'd amongst the greatest Scholars, she advancing in her Studies, &c. to the end Spain, and the whole World might receive some Advantage thereby; she began a new and most ingenious method of Physic; she wrote to the most august *Philip II*, to obtain the establishing of her Followers as the Public Physicians, — and in her Treatise call'd *The New Physic*, she learnedly, Dialogue wise, censures the Physic of the Ancients; and most famous Authors have since laid claim to many things, boasting themselves the first Discoverers of them, whereof she had full knowledge, and long before did publish them in her learned Books.

For a farther Proof of this point, I shall, in a few words, touch upon some of the eminent Women of Antiquity: I will pass over the Politic *Semiramis*, the valiant, and no less politic *Thamyras* Queen of *Syria*, who not only engaged *Cyrus*, but overcame him, by

outwitting him, destroying him by his own Stratagem. Nor will I instance *Sempronia*, mention'd by *Salust*, in his *Catiline's Conspiracy*, as learned, and witty. Nor will I particularize the fifteen eminent Women, that taught in the School of *Pythagoras*. All that will be necessary here, will be a short enumeration of the Names of some of most Ages, — as *Marcellina*, a Mistress worthy of *Acan* a Lyric Poet, that flourish'd in the 27th Olympiad; the oft-celebrated *Sappho*, great in Lyric, Elegy, and all manner of Poetry in the 42d Olympiad, with her Friend *Erinna*, and contemporary *Demophila*; *Thano*, the Wife of *Pythagoras*, both a Philosophers, and Poets, in the 56th Olympiad; *Cleobulina*, about the 70th Olympiad; *Corinna*, *Telesia* *Praxilla*, betwixt the Battle of *Marathon*, and the Peace of *Antalcidas*; *Alphisa*, between that Peace, and the taking of *Athens* by *Lysander*; *Cornificia*, among the *Romans*, Sister to *Cornicius* the Poet, in the second year of the 184th Olympiad; *Athenau*, after ward *Eudoxia*, in the Reign of *Theodosius* the younger; and *Pulcheria*, Sister to the same *Theodosius*. Among the modern *Italians*, *Angela*, Daughter to *Anthony de Niparides*; *Modesta*, *Lucretia*, *Marinella*, who writ a Poem on the Nobility of Woman-kind; *Olympia Clara*, *Margdalena Acciaiola*, *Valeria Minima*; *Anna Maria Schurman*, a *Fleming*. To these I might add of our own Nation, in the time of *Henry VIII*, Sir *Thomas More's* Daughter, who translated several of her Father's Latin Works, Mrs. *Elizabeth Cary*, Mrs. *Ann Ascue*, Mrs. *Elizabeth Weston*: Nor must I forget Queen *Elizabeth* herself, who was not only a politic but learned Princess; and nearer our own times, Mrs. *Katherine Philips*, commended by the great Cowley; and of my own knowledge, Mrs. *Behn*, who was not only an excellent Poetess, but discours'd very refinedly on any Subject that came in her way. I could name another that surpasses all these, if I feared not to offend her Modesty, by publishing her name.

This is enough to satisfy the World, that the Society have advanced nothing but Truth in that Affirmation before quoted, and therefore, that their deference to the fair Sex merits not that Condemnation some of the morose part of the Town are pleas'd to give them. Nor is it at all derogatory to the Reputation of a Philosopher, to meddle with *Questions of Love*, &c. since the contemplative, and refin'd *Plato*, and *Socrates* (to omit other Philosophers) have writ so many sage things on that Subject, that *Maximus Tyrius*, no small Admirer of *Plato*, says, "That he is amaz'd, to find *Plato*, and *Socrates* handling Homer out of their Circles, for containing light, and amorous things; when they themselves have writ far more light, and amorously."

Mr. non admiratio tantum habet, sed etiam stupor, cum Platonem, & Socratem lego, Homerum, de amicitia suis tractare, quod iam Levinus, & Isidorus scriberent, &c. — Cum & Plato, & Socrates Levinus longe ipsa scribere, &c.

Yet I find this not objected by any of the Opposers of these Philosophers, as a Crime, or Defect, they being only here condemn'd by *Tyrinus*, because they forbid the reading of *Homer*, for what they thought fit to mingle in their own Works.

This *short View of their Performances* makes it evident, what Advantage the Public will reap from their Endeavours, and how much Knowledge will be in a little time improv'd: For, as they very modestly express it, a diffusing that Knowledge to many, which is already familiar to the Learned, is an improvement of it. I will produce their own words, being a very moderate, and much too civil Answer, which they give to a very conceited, and impertinent Querist. The Query is this; — *Why you pretend to such strange things, and yet in effect tell the World no more than what we all know already?*

This Query, so worthy of Contempt, and Laughter, deserv'd no other Answer than Silence; but after they had wittily rally'd it, they give a serious Return with a great deal of Ingenuity, and Modesty, even to a Fault; degrading both their Industry, and Abilities, in turning what they do as a Representation of other mens Thoughts, and that all the improvement they make, is only the communicating them to those that knew 'em not before. But I wrong them in not transcribing their own words, which are these: — *'Tis true in some sense, Nil dicam, quod non dictum prius*, the World is Learned, and we wish it were more so; the finest things that can be said, are little else than *old Sence*, with a new Turn; and

if ye deny this, all the Orators in it must stand still, and neither *Divines*, nor *Lawyers*, get any more than our *Athenian Mercury*: Yet still what one man knows, another man does not, and a diffusing Knowledge is a sort of improving of it, perhaps the best way. — And a little after, in the same Question, — Besides, we are pretty confident, there are very many Questions here, some of moment, which were never before publicly decided, especially in *Morality*, which is by far the most useful part of Knowledge: And 'twould be no shame for us, should we own, our chief aim in this design, were to convey under a pleasant Dress *Notions of Virtue, and Honour into the Commonalty*, and rather make them better than miser, tho' indeed in one we do both, and cannot doubt in the mean while, but the curious, and ingenious Spirits will seldom take up our Paper, but they'll find something or other in it, that both may divert, and please them: For the less candid Judges, they have done all they can against it already, but avail nothing; the Paper still lives, and *is still like to do so in spite of all their ill-nature*, and finds that reception which we will lay the Design there of deserves.

I have thought fit to conclude with this Quotation out of the Works of the Society, because it is a Recapitulation of all that I have said, both as to their Design and Performances, with a short modest Vindication of both, if not a prophetic Assurance of its surpassing all the Oppositions it has or may meet with.

The THIRD PART of the History of the Athenian Society.

HAVING in the First Part run through the *Rise and Advantages* of this Society, in the Second their Performances, that are already extant, with a much greater Brevity than the nobility, and copiousness of the Subject required: I shall here anticipate their future Endeavours, or at least give the World a Prospect of those beneficial Efforts it will soon be blest with, from the matchless Industry, and Learning of the Athenian Society, which when compared with what has been already seen, will justly raise all mens Expectation of those yet unthought-of Discoveries, the successful Progress of their Labors, will in time produce, when such great Attempts have been aimed at, and effected in so little a time after their first Rise.

Their Care seems to have been to provide Means for the improvement of their Knowledge (as I have observed in the First Part) who had not the Abilities of Purse, to arrive to learned Education, and to purchase all those voluminous Books, which treat of those several Arts, and Sciences which are required to the composing a Scholar: This tho' the *Weekly Mercuries* would in time effect, yet more speedily to occur to the Impatience of some, who perhaps may be uneasy, in perusing so many things which tend to the satisfaction of others, to find amongst them what themselves desire, the Society have taken care for the compiling a Book entitled, *The young Student's Library*; containing the Substance, and Pith of all that's valuable in most of the best Books prin-

printed in England, and in the foreign Journals from the year 65, to this present time; to which will be added an Introduction to the use of Books, in a new Essay upon all sorts of Learning; written by the Athenian Society.

The Proposals sufficiently shew, that this Work is to be a Translation from the Universal Historical Bibliothecque, the Paris Journal des sçavans, the Acta Eruditorum Lipsie, the Giornali de Letterati, and other foreign Journals, to which the Society will add what is most considerable in the Extracts made by their own Countrymen; that so (to use their own words) by going backward, as well as forward, we may render our account of Books complete. The Preface to the Proposals of printing this Book, shew abundantly the usefulness of it, Extracts having received Encouragement from the Ingenious of all Nations, ever since they have been set on foot, being necessary not only for them, that cannot go to the price of the Books themselves, or have not time to peruse so many large Volumes, but also for all the Learned, who in a little time may here find the Defect of every Book, and some observation in its Performance, from whence they may frame a Judgment what Book to buy, and what not, if they are not fully satisfied with it in little; for, the chief Force, and Matter of most Books lies in a little compass, the ornamental parts of Language generally making up the bulk. But I shall give you a concise account of this Book from Mr. De la Croix's Works of the Learned, who having been formerly an Antagonist with the Society, on account of Extracts, may reasonably be supposed not to flatter any of their Performances, especially in that kind: His words are these in his Book for January, 1692.

It consists (says he of the Young Student's Library) of Abstracts of Books in several Faculties, as Divinity, Critics, History, Geography, Philosophy, Law, Physic, &c. many of which are collected out of the Journals des Sçavans of Paris, and the Universal Bibliothecque, and, as I hear, accurately translated; but the most considerable, tho not the biggest part, are two original pieces: The first is written by a Divine, a Member of the Athenian Society, who has spent several years in the study of the Hebrew Tongue, and shews a great deal of Learning, and Piety, in maintaining the Antiquity of the Point-Vowels against Levis Capel, and his Followers: He pretends they are at least as ancient as Ezra.

The second Original Piece is an Essay upon all sorts of Learning, as Divinity, Physic, History, Poetry, Geometry, Architecture, Music, Civil Law, Canon Law, Optics, Dyalling This far Mons. De la Croix: And I have nothing to add of the main Substance of the Book, but that there will be two English Abstracts added by the Society, and that they will, as the Proposals inform me, supervise the Translations; but of these things you'll be far

ther informed in the Preface to it, which is now almost finished: And I'll only add this Remark; That the Abstract of the Works of the Learned wholly owes its Rise, and Progress to this Society, all things of that nature having been entirely forgotten in England, tho of such great use; as appears at large in the Preface to the First Volume, and I suppose will be yet set in a clearer Light in this Monthly Account of Books, which, I perceive by their late Advertisement, is now to be printed only for their Bookseller Mr. Denton, to begin this next May, and so continue monthly.

I shall say no more of the main body of the Young Student's Library, (which will contain the Substance of above an hundred Volumes, most in folio) but I cannot pass over the original Piece of the Hebrew Points, it being a thing of that vast consequence, that on it all the Christian Faith depends; for, if there were no points, the Certainty of Scripture is quite out of doors: It consists of thirteen sheets of Paper, and bears this Title;

על קדמוני הנקודות והטעמים אשר ללשון הקדש

Or, A Discourse concerning the Antiquity, and Original of the Points, Vowels, and Accents that are placed in the Hebrew Bible.

The whole is divided into two parts, the first part considers the Opinions of Elias Levita, Ludovicus Capellus, Dr. Walton, and others, for the novelty of the Points; shewing the improbability of their Conceits, that the Masorites of Tiberias pointed the Text, from the silence of the Jews about it, their Testimonies against it, the unfitness of the Time, Place, and Persons of late assign'd for the invention of the Points, from the nature of the Masora, and of the Masoretic Notes upon the Verses, Words, Letters, Vowels, and Accents, of the Old Testament; their Observations on all the kinds of the Keri, u, Ketib; the words written full, or defective; the Issur Sopberim, the Tikkun Sopberim, and the rest of the parts of the Masora, and from other Considerations. The second part proves the Antiquity, Divine Original, and Authority of the present Punctuation, by the Testimony of Jews, and Christians, the universal Consent of all Nations that receive the Scriptures, their quiet possession of the Text, as it is now pointed by Prescription, from Age to Age. The Vowels (an essential part of Speech) oft express'd by the Punctuation only. The Obscurity of the Scripture without Points, which yet was commanded to be written very plainly. The Old Testament evidencing it self to be the Word of God, in, and by the Punctuation only, the Anomalies thereof manifesting its Antiquity. The Promise of Christ, Mat. 5. 18. That nothing shall be lost out of the Law, and the Prophecy, whereof the Points are so great a part. The manifest Absurdity of the contrary Opinion; and other Considerations;

Together with Answers to several Objections of *Eliaz Levins*, *Ludovicus Capelinus*, Doctor *Walton*, and others against their Antiquity; such are the Testimonies of some Jews, about the Points. The unpointed Copy of the Law is kept in the Synagogue. The Silence of the ancient Caballistical Writings of the *Mishna* and *Talmuds* about them. The *LXX*, and *Chaldee* Paraphrase reading otherways than our Punctuation directeth. The *Samaritan* Character (supposed to be the ancient *Hebrew*) never pointed. The Novelty of their Names: The Superfluity of their Numbers. The possibility of preserving the Sound without the Shapes, and of reading the Bible without Points (as well as the *Rabbinical Commentaries*, the *Talmuds*, and other Oriental Languages, are read without them) by the help of the *Musick-lection*, or letters *Ew*, *a*, *b*, *v*, *i*, by the sense of the place, &c. The Silence of *Jerom*, and the Fathers, about them. The Opinion of divers modern Divines, both Papists, and Protestant, against the Antiquity of the Shapes of the present Punctuation. The *Keri*, *u*, *Keisib*, being about the Letters, and never about the Points, and the like.

This bare Transcription of the Contents of this *Original Piece* (a sight of some sheets of which my Bookseller, by his Interest, procured me) is sufficient to shew of what greatness it will be not only to all Divines, but also to every one that is curious in Enquiry into the original Text of Sacred Writ, a Study as much above all others as the Soul is above the Body. The consequence of this Treatise is, as I have remark'd no less than the Authority, and Certainty of Christian Faith: For, as *Anthonius Rodolphus Gualterius*, speaking of the Antiquity of the Points, thus pleads for them, saying, That *They who are of the contrary Opinion do not only make doubtful the Authority of the Scriptures, but wholly pluck it up by the roots; for, without the Vowels, and Notes of Distinction it has nothing firm, and certain*. And this is sufficient to shew the necessity, and usefulness of this Undertaking, and how reasonable a Treatise of this nature is, to obviate the Objections of the Atheists of this Age, that we may give a loose to our Fancies in *Bible*, since there is nothing of Certainty in the Bible itself: And if this Ground prevailed, it would easily reduce us all to that part of *Hobbes*, of veering with every Wind that blows, and changing our Religion as often as Fortune should our Princes to different Persecutions. As for the Performance of this *Dream*, in this Piece, the Contents shew, that he has taken notice of all, that can be raised against the Opinion he defends, and the many years he has given himself to the Study of the *Hebrew*, and *Original Tongues*, as well as all the *Rabbinical Learning*, leave no doubt, but that Performance is equal to the nobleness of the Subject: And according to my small Judgment in that way, if I may be allow'd to guess at the rest by what I have seen, he has done it with a great deal of *Strength of Judgment*,

Force, and *Evidence* of Argument, and *Profundness* of Skill. 'Twas the Saying of a great man, that he would easily tell the Progress any one would make in any Science, if he knew but the Value he had for it, for earnest Desire stirs up indefatigable Industry, the Mind being never satisfied till it has obtain'd that to which it was born, by the highest esteem, and value it has conceived of it. And no man could have a greater Esteem for any Knowledge, than this Divine had for this, as the chief, and obligatory Study of Men of his Character, who were to give the true, and genuine sense of Scripture to the Souls he directed under the pain of *Woe*, at the last Tribunal, which could never be satisfactorily done by depending entirely upon the Word of other men, without an ability of consulting the Key of those sacred Mysteries it self, I mean the *original Text*: And 'tis to be wonder'd as well as complain'd of, that so many of our Divines, through a *Criminal Slothfulness*, do too much neglect this necessary Study, which our *Divine* has employ'd several years in, so much was his Care, and Zeal for the honour and vindication of the Christian Religion, (by placing it on a firm Foundation) and the Good not only of those Souls under his charge, but also all others who will make any improvement of his Labors, which, by what has been said, may very well be concluded to be accurate, and elaborate, and consequently abundantly satisfactory. And it were to be wish'd, that the same Great man would oblige the World with some other pieces of *Rabbinical Learning*, that he mentions in these sheets, having in these I now speak of answered what has never been attempted in English.

Nor has any Prospect of any present, or future advantage to his Interest, engag'd him in this laborious Work, he having generously given the Copy to the Undertaker, without the least Gratitude. And indeed his other Virtues, are as well sort'd to his Character, as these I have spoke of, for he has learnt that divine Lesson our blessed Saviour inculcated to his Followers, saying, *Learn of me, for I am meek, and humble of heart*, how charming, and excellent soever this Lesson be, yet alas, 'tis followed by a very few, and *Pride* is never more visible, than in those, whose promise 'tis to press this admirable Doctrine of Humility. Learning that should teach them to know themselves better, generally transporting them to an insufferable Contempt of the rest of Mankind, but here it has met with a happy Temper, an innate *Modesty*, and a sweeter, agreeable Affability to all Men, a Charity, not limited to Factions, Parties, or Religions, but universal like that of the first Instituter of our Holy Religion, knowing very well that the perfection of a Christian life is a strict Imitation of our Master, and Founder. How admirably has our blessed Lord drawn the corrupt Nature of too many of our Hot-headed Zealots, in that Parable of the Good Samaritan, every one pass'd by the wounded stranger, the very

very Priests, gave him not one eye of regard, as not worthy a look of the chosen; till the Samaritan (a People rejected by the Jews as the most infamous, and wicked) came and bound up his Wounds, and took that care of him, which humanity required. I know too many that profess a great deal of Religion, and glory in the name of Priest, that will let a near Relation, if of an other persuasion, perish for want of what his innumerable Servants enjoy, this is still more odious in the Clergy who should gain Profit more by affability, and meekness, necessary Ingredients to the Composition of their Character, and not by Fire, and Brimstone, cruelty beyond the barbarity even of Cannibals, for an accidental misfortune of Education; *Millners* may win them to give ear to the Truth, but such an inhumanity (not to say unchristian hardness) makes all they can say come with the prejudice of being delivered by one, that is not of Christ, since he has given a clear contrary mark of his Disciples. This short digression shews the Excellence of those Vertues this Reverend Divine has made a part of himself, much more noble Qualifications than that extraordinary one of his Learning. I am sorry that my Ignorance of his Personal Conversation, should concur with my inability to deprive the Reader of a farther, tho' imperfect, account of this Divine.

Before I pass from the Young Student's Library, I think, to make my account the perfecter, it will not be impertinent if I insert here a view of that Emblem, that is promis'd to be prefix'd to it, of the Athenian Society, with an explanation of it, a sight of which I procur'd at the Engravers, and both the Society and Book-seller will, I hope pardon me for making it public before its time, since 'tis here mention'd out of honour to their Design.

The Copper Plate is of a Folio size, and is thus divided; above the Society in an Oval is writ, *The Athenian Society*, this Oval is supported by two Angels, from whence falls down a Curtain of Lawn over the Faces of the 12 Members of the Society, who with Papers on the Table, and Pens in their Hands sit all equally in a direct Line, every one dress'd in the distinctive Habits of the several Sciences, under which the Queries they

have undertaken to Answer, do fall, — the *Drum*, *Physician*, *Mathematician*, *Philosopher*, *Lawyer*, *Poet*, &c. at the other side of the Table, the several Querists present themselves with their Notes, for Resolution of their Difficulties, in a corner, hard by sits a *Monkey* (expressing the Quality of the Interlopers by his *Apish* Nature) with the Claw of a Cat, whom he holds fast in his Embraces, endeavouring to pull some Nursery Fire, with this label coming out of his Mouth *virtus ex arde*, that is *Live by Theft*, the Interlopers having endeavour'd to rob the first Undertaker of his subsisting by that Project, which he first set a foot, and brought to perfection, and therefore merit that Character, of living on the Spoils of their Neighbours. At the four Corners are four Cities, *Athens*, (where on a Pillar is plac'd an Owl sacred to *Minerva*), *Rome*, *Oxford*, *Cambridge*, in the two first of which Learning once flourish'd, in the two last does now. On the top of all the Emblem, is plac'd a Raven; for several reasons, first because the Raven was the first Projector of the Design, and that therefore is a proper place for him to discover the Approaches of the Cuckers, that come to invade his Nest, and secondly, because 'tis the Nature of those Birds to have always a Centinel aloft to view all the Avenues, and Approaches of its Enemies, tho' I never heard of an Owl riding on a Ravens back till some Modern Authors who resolv'd to invert Nature, as well as destroy all Religion discover'd the Secret and Never ill-ben known Sympathy betwixt those two Birds, to much that one would carry the other a Pick-a-pack, a Pick-a-pack, but I must pass from these Emulators, or rather Copiers of *George and Tom* to proceed in my account.

Below the Emblem is plac'd the Explanation, mark'd with several Letters, which refer to the same in the several parts of the Portraiture, to begin and end in the order I find them in, (A) direct to the 12 Members of the Society, with these Verses.

Behind the Scenes is mighty Art,
Nor are we known, nor will we be;
The World, and we exchanging thus,
While we find chat for them, they Work for us.

B. C. D. &c. refers to the Querists in this Order.

- B. (1.) Dye for that Lady in the Mask
We'll tell you what she comes to Ask
Tho' an unconscionable Task
Tis how her Lover fast to bind,
False, as her self, false as the faithless Wind.
- C. (2.) That other brings her *Paragon* free
With golden Fetters, Lock and Key
Ifs has a Sing our Thoughts does crave,
Or only a Tongue as other Females have?
- D. (3.) Thinking our Notions too jejune,
Some take their Aim at Madam Moon;
Some bring hard queries, which we crack,
And throw the gazing World the Kernels back.

(1.) To
several Lady
Querists

(4) Referring to the
Arguments
and Answers.

(4) Here's

- (4.) Referring to some Queries of that Nature sent by the Seamen.
- (5.) Referring to the Mathematical Queries.
- (6.) Referring to the Farmer's Queries.
- (7.) In reference to the crowd of impertinent Querists.
- (8.) This Stanza has reference to those that go to hang or kill themselves, who in the Emblem are directed by an Angel to apply themselves to the Society.
- (9.) Refers to Mr. Smith the Coffee-man, who so far contributes to this Affair, as receiving all the Queries and conveying them to the Society.
- (10.) Referring to what I said before of the Monks making use of the Cats Foot to pull the Nuts out of the Tree.
- (11.) Relating to Natural and Artificial Rarities of England, &c. of which immediately.
- (12.) This refers to the Raven on the top of all, an account of which I have given above.

- E. (4.) Here's Honest Tar, who won'd his Crown afford
Were he paid off, ere he returns aboard
To know what he must ask in vain,
When we shall hear the French again?
- F. (5.) Euclid, sober as thou'rt, 'twas before despair'd
Now may'st thou have thy Circle squar'd,
But Art is long, and thou must stay,
Nor Rome, nor built, nor Athens in a day.
- G. (6.) We know, Sir, but too Well, your case
Some powerful Faction right or wrong embrace
Or starve, and die without a Place.
- H. (7.) Avoid you run of Noisy souls
Once more, — you are not in our Rules.
Cou'd we but please the Learn'd few,
Which send from far, we cou'd dispense with you.
- I. (8.) If bitter last wretches, Whither wou'd you run?
By guilt, or by unhappy Love, undone?
What need you perish, or despair?
If you'd have aid, an Angel shows you where.
- K. (9.) This Query quickly understood
He only Asks d'ye think his Coffee good?
Yet wou'd crowd in, tho' just by the door,
Or wou'd he'd take our Letters in no more.
- L. (10.) These dainty Nuts I must not loose
Nor burn my Pawns — b' your leave dear puss,
If those that put them there enquire
'Twas you not I that robb'd the fire.
How sweet is Interlopers Hire!
- M. (11.) All England's Rarities, are gather'd here,
From unknown Earth, Fire, Water, Air;
Thousands agree in such a glorious strife
Or else a moments Work wou'd last a Life.
- N. (12.) With Beak, and Talons, I infect
Those Cuckers that invade my Nest,
And if Minerva yet supply
My Ancient gift in Prophecy
All Scab'd, and Old, they in some hollow Tree shall die.

I am ignorant who design'd this Emblem, as well as who compos'd the Verses I have here quoted, which tho' they come not up to those of this Society, yet naturally enough express what they are design'd for, perhaps much better than if they had been in former Numbers, *Emblematically*. I do not think it proper to regard the Majesty of Style, and Thought, when their aim is only a bare narratory Explication. This any one that has convers'd with that kind of Writing will grant; and that Book of *Emblems*, made upon the Emperors, confirms my Position. So that the Poet (as every Writer ought) considered here the nature of the thing he writ, and adapted his *Thought, Numbers, and Language* to the Subject.

Having thus given you an account of the young Students Library, I shall proceed to the other things of as great, if not greater consequence, as a new System of experimental Philosophy, upon the four Elements, tho' this will be some while before it see the World, both because time will be taken for the immediate Experiments, and also because this new Project of the artificial, and natural Rarities of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, with the Foreign Plantations thereunto belonging, will employ them on a more general, and entertaining Subject; so that they cannot have leisure, till they have, with the

great assistance they are like to have from the Ingenious, rid their hands pretty well of it. The Reason they deferr'd the *Natural History* so long, was, because several ingenious Gentlemen, well skill'd in those affairs (to use their own expression) generously offer'd them their assistance, upon which account that their undertaking might be the more serviceable to the Public (which they have always chiefly in their eye) they waited those supplies from other hands, which they were promis'd; for there are several new Assistants, join'd themselves to this Society, for the speedier, and better carrying on of this new Project, if I can call that *New* which depended upon the former, for the World is oblig'd to the first *Athenian* Project, for this *Undertaking*, since the first rise of it, was from a Query sent (the Natural result of the Societys design to answer all sorts of Questions) on that Subject, so that it seems, indeed, to be but a *New branch* that is sprung from the first design, which may in the same manner, give birth, in time, to a great many other, admirable Improvements in all sorts of Knowledge.

This Project will not be a bare Collection of what the best Authors of our Nation have writ, of *Rarities Natural, Artificial and Civil*, but also of what ever Observations the curious

rious Gentlemen of all England shall make, and communicate to this Society, as, besides their own diligent enquiries into all things that fall under those heads, first in the Regions of the Air — All sorts of strange, *Appearances*, and their several Forms, Qualities, and Circumstances, Noises, and their several Kinds, Tempests, Thunder, and Lightning: Strange Winds, their different Natures, and Qualities; with their several dependances of weather, &c. *Rains, Hail, Mists, Dew, Frost, Haze* extraordinary in any particular, as to form, quantity, colour, or effects, *Subterranean Streams*, or *Exhalations* that issue out of the Earth, as to their Quality, and Manner, and Effects, &c.

Next, as to fresh Waters, their several Springs, as to quality, medicinal or other, hot or cold, extraordinary in colour, or any peculiar property, as oily or petrifying; what Fish does each afford most, &c. as also Salt waters, their different nature, places of difference, and degrees of saltness, their depths, &c. as to Currents, Edies, Concourses of Tides; Species of Fishes, &c. where and how.

Next, as to the Earths, — what sorts of Oxbres, Chalks, Marles, Clays, &c. their Qualities and Use; Turfs, Coal dug, &c. remarkable figures of Hills, &c. Minerals, their quality, and where prepar'd, in like manner all sorts of Metals, &c.

Farther concerning Plants and Trees that are unusual and extraordinary, in Growth, Fruit, Leaves, or time of Blooming — Gardening, and all the curious Observations that can be made as to the Insects, Diseases, Cures, proper to each Vegetable, or common to more, or all. Next, as to Husbandry, what usual Grains, Grasses, &c. are sow'n in each Country, Improvements on all sorts of Land, and other Curiosities in Husbandry; new Inventions as to Plowing, preferation of Corn, peculiar ways of opening, and draining Marlies, Boges, Fens, &c.

Farther concerning Animals, Observations, on Insects in their several Species, who has observ'd their Origin, Perfection, Corruption, Diseases, and Cures, the life of all sorts of Birds, Reptiles, and Fishes, and Beasts; unusual qualities of each, as to Generations and Signs, &c. strange accidents befalling Men, or Women, prodigious, or numerous Births? similitude of Persons extraordinary, any thing remarkable for excess or defect in all, and every of their Parts, and Circumstances, and all the singular Occurrences that make either Man, or Woman, or Families more than commonly remarkable.

Farther, as to what Arts, are either improv'd or invented, and where, extraordinary buildings of all sorts, Persons skilful, and in what chiefly, &c.

Lastly, concerning Antiquities, Seats of Kings, Priors, Abbies, &c. Castles, Fortifications, Banks of Land, Barrows, Monuments of Stone, and any thing remarkable of any or every of them. Of Councils,

Parliaments, and Terms held, and where. Old Episcopal Sees, Battles fought, Armour, old Money, Urns, Lamps, Lachrymatories, Patemons, Bracelets, Rings, &c. found, and in whose possession, immemorial Customs, and all other Curiosities, which may be serviceable to the public, or to private Persons.

In the Third Number of the Seventh Volume you will find all these Queries here inserted, which are by the Society propos'd to all the Ingenious Gentlemen of each Nation concern'd, whose Contributory-help they desire, and will without doubt obtain of all such, who have the least desire to bestow any of their time for the Honour, and Glory of their Country. Nature has been extremely fruitful of Talents in these Kingdoms, that compose the British Monarchy, and 'tis pity Gentlemen of Estates should be carry'd away with a desire of seeing the Novelties of other Countries, before they have any tolerable insight into their own, where they were born. Certainly every Patriot will not think his time ill spent, which is employ'd for the discovery, and knowledge of our selves, or at least our Country of which each is but part. This Generous desire, has inspir'd several Learned Gentlemen to offer their services already, as I have observ'd above, tho' I am ignorant of all of them, except one, of whom by accident I gain'd this account. He was the first that offer'd his Endeavours for the carrying on of this design, with which he was so extremely pleas'd at the first notice, that was given of it to the World, and indeed England, I believe affords not a Gentleman better qualify'd for this Undertaking, being first, accomplish'd with a variety of Learning, having great skill in Experimental Philosophy, and scarce his Equal in Cosmography, a science which is Mother of strange and wonderful Discoveries, to all the attain'd Excellences Nature has added strong and admirable Judgment, a new and curious Fancy, and an extremely happy Memory, with a Temper that is agreeable, and generous, and fortune (or rather Heaven, for when I see Merit bless'd with a Competency, I conclude it the effect of a more Disposal than partial Chance) has crown'd all (for so it is in spite of Philosophy) with a handsome Estate, all which concurring he seems to me, *The Phoenix Boy* reward.

This Reward, is all the account I am capable, as yet of giving thee as to their present, and future performances, which as they have gain'd them little Fame, and Reputation, so has that same contracted Envy, and ungenerous Opposers, (Virtue when expos'd to the Eye of the World seldom being without Enemies, whose aim has been (at least of the greater part of them) to deprive the Publick of those many advantages, I have made it appear, it receives from this Undertaking, and the Performances of the present Members of the Athenian Society,

by using what means they can to discourage the gain of the Bookseller, that so he may let fall so beneficial a Project, tho' they could never yet Effect it. The first Opposers they met with were the *Anabaptists*, who, I have shew'd were silenced by the Society; then the demure Quaker put in for his share, tho' to as little purpose, and among the Opposers I must not forget, tho' one of the most inconsiderable, was the *Vindicator* of Mr. Jones, on the subject of *Usury*. But all these were upon particular Controversies, and made Enemies by their being disobl'd because the Society would not Complement them so far, as to subscribe to their Opinions. But on the first of February I find in the Advertisement of the *Athenian Society* that some body else set up a Paper interfering with their Design: but it seems that the Author of that Paper became soon sensible of the *Injustice* of his undertaking, and therefore was not ashamed in a public manner to acknowledge his Error, for I find in the *fifth Mercury* of the *Week Volume*, a Letter from him to the Gentlemen of the *Athenian Society*, which I shall transcribe.

To the Gentlemen of the *Athenian Society*.

Being at length convinc'd that the Design I was lately engag'd in, did not reach up to that *Utility* I am at I thought myself oblig'd to desire you to insert this short Letter in your *Mercury*, to satisfy the World of the *Injustice*, as well as *fruitless* endeavour of such an undertaking. If a breach of the *Golden Rule*, may be term'd *Injustice*, this must be so, since I believe no Man, that is the first *Designer* of any thing, which by his Industry alone has turn'd to account, will say, he would be content to have another make use of his Project, and run away with the profit of his Labors. But I am perswaded, the Endeavors of any to interfere with you, would prove in a small time of as little advantage, as the Attempt deserves. For the Town will not give it self the trouble of perusing both, when it may meet with all in one. But if the Love, which the World generally has for contention, should give a *Temporary* encouragement, yet the clashing, and Answer, and Replies from one to another, would shut both from the business, and end of these *Mercuries*, when they shall be fill'd up, with *Reflections*, *Errors*, *Mistakes*, and *Recriminations*, the Answers to *Queries* will find but small room, and the impatient *Querists* be forc'd to wait much longer for a Solution of his *Necessities*, which must end in the destruction of both Undertakers. In the small time I have been engag'd in this affair, I have had a sufficient Experience of the uneasiness of the *Writ*, and *Writings*, that will be at the expence of many in their *Queries*. One peremptorily demands an answer in a time prefixt: Another will not be content barely to demand a speedy reply to a Catalogue of *Queries* of half a Sheet

of Paper, but threatens upon neglect, some mighty effort of Indignation: And in a little time whoever shall go upon this design, will find his hands so full of Business, that he must incur the dissatisfaction of his *Querists*, for one day brings in more Work, than a Month can dispose of, unless instead of half a sheet of Paper, he would publish weekly two Twelve penny Books, for 25 and 30 *Queries* in a day were much within the Number I in that little time receiv'd. To conclude, since from the beginning of Learning to this day, nobody started this design but your selves for the weekly diversion of the *Curious*, I hope you may for the future, enjoy the benefit of it, for I am satisfy'd the profit of any other will never compensate his trouble,
Yours to Command, &c.

This Letter well observes the immorality of such an attempt, from 'tis evident that tho' the Law take not hold of it yet it is of equal guilt to the Robbing of a Man's House or Shop of his Goods, with which he drives his Trade, for a Project of this nature is a Commodity in which Booksellers deal, and tho' it evades the Penalty that is laid on those of that Trade, that shall print another Man's Copy, yet it has nothing to justify it self but *Impunity*, like several other Mischiefs, which the Law has not yet provided against, this will appear a little plainer, by a comparison. Our Laws have provided a greater punishment for those that counterfeit our English Coin, than for such, who do the same to any Foreign Money, yet certainly no man that will pretend to thought, will thence conclude, that therefore, the Cheat, is less in one, than the other, since the Injustice that is done to our Neighbour is the same, which certainly must constitute the guilt of the Crime. The Gentleman that sent this Letter was (I find) afterward in a very impertinent, and foolish Preamble, ventur'd for it, where the Authors (for one would scarce imagine a *State of Blockheads* should club for such a trifle) says against what is advanc'd in this Letter, that *London* is as capable of maintaining two Papers of this nature, as two Windmills; supply them both with *Queries* in will I grant, but I am sure those that did attempt it, found by experience it never paid for the Work it set 'em about, tho' they were careful of being at as little charge of Print as they could, *Title*, *Margins*, *Advertisements*, and *Algebraical* *Cannon* transcrib'd verbatim from Authors I could produce, and not understood by one in ten thousand, and perhaps not by the Transcriber himself, leaving very little room for any matter of Ingenuity or Diversion, and ev'n that was taken up with *Solitary Queries*, *Prophecies*, and *Blasphemy*. But I will not anticipate what I suppose the *Athenian Society* themselves will expose to the World in its proper Colours. Indeed their whole design seem'd to be to laugh, and ridicule *Solidity*, and *Seriousness* out of the World, that so they might make an opener, and more easy later to *Atheism*, and that this was their Aim is more than probable from that blasphemous expression of *overturning their Maker*, at the expense of *Strenuous* and *Zealous*, and affirming that there were many *fiend's* *Relations* in *God*, and their turning *God's* *Judgment* on *Sodom* into ridicule, and a *Jest* — all which, would I confess almost prevail with a Man to believe that those reports were true, which were then given of them, viz. That some among them did not believe in *JESUS CHRIST*, and that the same *Luciferian* should say he would undertake to show as many *absurdities* number, for number, in the *N. Testament* as in *Shabomet's* *Alcoran*. But whether these were *Calumnies* or no, I am sure (if I may judge of their design by what they did publish) they seem'd bent to confound the Minds of the Vulgar, and incline them to *Debauchery*, and *Atheism* rather than to fix them in any thing *solid*, and *virtuous*: In short as the *Athenians* said of their design, That the World was already very *learn'd*, yet they desired to make it more so. So those Interlopers might have said of their performances, That the World was very wicked already, but their desire, and intentions should contribute to render it entirely so. What could these dispute about the testimony of *Josephus* mean, but to bring the very being of *Christ* into doubt?

doubt? or at least that the Primitive Christians, promoted the Kingdom of Heaven by that same way the Devil does his, viz. by Lies. But what mighty Arguments will these Anti-Christians bring, for a Proof of their Assertion? nothing but bare Conjecture, to persuade that in least it was not likely that *Jefephus*, a Jew, should think so favourably of Christ. Why were it true he says almost as much of Christ as we Christians (perhaps more than they do) believe, but what if I should say it is likely *Jefephus* did believe all that he writes? I am sure I have his words on my side (his words I say, not all these SPARKS have said cannot convince me of the contrary) but it is so strange a thing in our day, that a Man should for, himself, and contrary to what his opinion is; there were no Preferences among the Christians but racks, tortures, &c. they could set up no Statues to the Honour of his Memory, which the *Antichristians* did. He was a Jewish Priest, and one that came over to *Truth*, unable to bear the Extremities of the Siege of *Jerusalem*. But suppose none of these Considerations carry any weight may we not as well suppose *Jefephus* to have said these things of our Blessed Saviour, tho' he continued in a contrary opinion as to other things: how hard it was for the Converted *True* to quit their Antient *Traditions* is evident from the Scripture ever after they had received Christ as very God, and very Man, and the true *Messias* as well, as many other moderate Men, who have justified those of an other persuasion in some Particulars. Thus, tho' it was the opinion of a great many fiery Zealots, that the Heathens ador'd the Devil, yet Dr. *Striding* just, the present Bishop of *Worcester* from their own Authors contends with a great deal of reason (as you will grant if you peruse a Book, entitl'd; *The History of the Oracles*) that they directed their devotion to the great God of Heaven, and Earth, as the ultimate end of their Worship, and who that has read *Cicero's* *Stuica*, &c. but must believe the same? yet I hope these Gentlemen will not conclude from thence that these Words were forg'd into the Doctor's Book, by some friends of the *Heathens*?

So the *ATHENIAN SOCIETY*, tho' they are no Papists, are such friends to truth, as to deny there was ever such a Person as Pope *Jean*, and indeed *William* is able to be answered on that point.

Thus much for the *Equity* of such an undertaking and the Persons concern'd in it as well as their prophane and trifling performances, for they not only left Divinity to the *Atheists*, (as they first profess'd) but *Philosophy*, and indeed every thing that was solid, or ingenious; now let us see what encouragement they met with. 'Twas much as the above quoted Letter profess'd, not enough to pay for Paper, much less for Printing and Copy: This I am positive in, because I made an enquiry of the *MERCURY WOMEN* about it, nor could it be other ways expected, since the *Atheists* took the ready way to suppress it by giving their Readers all the little Mittal, that was to be gain'd out of their Our, purg'd of its mere balley drop, with remarks on their Errors, and their own improvements on their Thoughts: For a farther satisfaction to the Reader, I shall insert their Promise (which they all alone performed) and title made to all their Sacrifices in the 1st Number of the 6th Volume, (tho they often repeated it before, and after in other *Miscellanies*.)

Finding that publishing our *Mercuries* four times a
 week, would quite clog our Undertaking, and render
 it useless, we shall for the future only publish them on
Tuesdays, and *Saturdays* as formerly, and that we may
 render our undertaking perfect, we promise our *Readers*,
 that in case any Person should interfere with us in our
 design of answering Questions, they shall constantly
 find in our *Saturday Mercury*, Answer to all his Questions
 whatever, that so our Querists may not be put to
 double Charges (by buying the same Questions twice as
 first) nor the Coffee-houses burthen'd with too many
 Papers. In another Advertisement they tell the
 World that it shall find in their Papers all the *Antiquari-
 a's* best Thoughts remarks on his Errors, and their
 own Improvements upon all he advances.

Performing these things with all due justice and impartiality in the World; and constantly without omitting anything worth taking notice of, is no wonder that so few were found void to much of Sense as to buy their trifles, (the more pardonable indeed for being so very short) when they might have a view of all that was valuable in them in the *Alphabetic Memory*; and that too with

great Additions. So may they thrive, and interfere with
no other work!

I shall not here among the other Oppositions they have sent me, forget the Endeavours of their Enemies to cast an Imputation of *Enthusiasm* on the Members of the *SOCIETY*: But it is to be observed, that what they have said that they are of the Church of England, that blind Zeal is still cannot deny it. I shall therefore so much on the patience of the Reader for once to prove that this is not true at such a day, or that there is such a thing as *Enthusiasm*, as well as that the *Articles* of this Society is of the Church of England, as by Law intended, tho' out of many I will choose two or two places, the first—*Volume 1st. Number 1st. and 2d.*—The Query is this—*What Community of your Opinions comes nearest to the Doctrine of our blessed Saviour, the Apostles, and Primitive Fathers?*—The Answer is—*—* Undoubtedly it is our Opinion, that the Communion we now leaves are of, and hope to live, and die in, namely that of the Church of England is the best in the World, and nearest to the Doctrine, of our Saviour, the Apostles, and Primitive Fathers, and unless we thought it we should be very ill men to continue in it—*—* I wish the Reader would consult this Place I have quoted, where he will find evident beyond evasion, the distinctive Medium betwixt *Enthusiasm* and other *Philosophical* opinions, particularly as to the *Litany* and *Eucharist*, &c. as large set down, which were too long to me to transcribe here. Number 25. of the same Volume, *Quest. 4.* is a farther Confirmation of this. The Query is, *I desire your Opinion, what have you would advise me to for my private Devotions, as being a single Person.*—*—* Stay, Reader mind well the Answer.—*—* *Single.*—What lo many great and good men have been concerned in the Communion of us. The *LITURGY* of the Church of *—* *—* *—* If the Love of one Man, then *—* *—* *—* *The Whole Duty of Man.*

This assurance is enough to convince any reasonable Man of whose Church the Members of this Society were, to imagine, that the different (never in want) of their opinions to cast an *Odius* upon them, in the Affairs of Religion, since too many are cut off away with a *PROLEPTIC PÆSEDICA* against any thing, that shall be offered, by one of the other persuasion, thinking to supply all their other defects, by a *blind and unchristianable Zeal*.

But as the Opponents this Noble design met with were many, as appears from what I have said, so were the Supporters not less numerous, from all parts of England, Some *per se* known *Sirs*, and from great, and learned Men, as I conclude from the Gentleman I lately mention'd, who has join'd himself to them on the account of the *Natural Rarities*, and that worthy Divine mention'd in the beginning of this last part, so still in *Rational Learning* our interest led which the Approbation of the Ingenious Gentlemen of *Learned Wit* and Reputation, have given them in the *Venerable Society* to this *Library*; our most noble the Judge, and a very Learned Gentleman, which he lost in a letter to the *PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY*, (which being now in the Press, I go on to) it begins thus

I have been told that some of your ATHENIAN
 friends have been writing me from the Library containing
 your Athenian for the 11th Dec. that resembles Agassiz, you
 disagree there with Agassiz, and hold that it is trivial
 to say that Agassiz's objects, which without history, gave me
 some ground for you, that I rejected a natural method of Agassiz,
 to render your Agassiz's essential to the history, which I
 ought to support in the first you then say, "I have in my
 Understanding, as one of the most legible Proofs, that
 Agassiz has succeeded, and if Agassiz's method, the most fundamen-
 tal, to improve knowledge in the generally of Man and
 according to the natural Sciences ————" after this
 is proposed to some very good advice, for which I refer
 you to see an Edition, which contains the 4th
 Volume I believe is given, and therefore, I think of
 all the things, which I have seen, that I have them fur-
 nishing me with the most interesting and useful of their
 past and present, and I think that I have the
 power to move the *REVUE DE LA LITTÉRATURE* that pro-
 duce the result.

Having thus been sworn in all the powers I proposed to my self upon my resolution of Writing of this *History*, with a much greater liberty I conclude, that what we well handling a Subject of this extraordinary kind, I shall here

conclude, with a short View of what I have done.

In the *first part*, I have represented the NOVELTY, occasion, and manner of its Invention; the Advantages it afforded the World, as the making that familiar to many which was before confin'd within too narrow a compass, and recommending the Beauty of Knowledge to them, who were frighten'd from it by the *Mercenary Schools*; whereas its *easy Charms* in the *Athenian Drift*, will excite many to the Study of Wisdom; they, at least, whose necessary Business will not permit a more *trivial* Dissertation, may gather good notions of things by a meer cursory reading of the *weekly Mercures*, which will be no small Improvement of *Civility*, and *Conversation*. Farther, I shew'd, that it was unreasonable, that they to whom Nature had given a *noble Genius* should be deny'd, when grown up, the Improvement of it (without the tedious Discipline of the School) because their Parents had neglected, or their Circumstances hinder'd it when young; that they who naturally *light Learning*, will do so still, since this Design is to improve, not alter Nature; that it were an Injustice, that they should be deprived of it, because confin'd to Languages: Nor is it reasonable that a *Genius* should esteem himself above others, for one without the other. I shall only add here to these Considerations, that whereas this was begun in War (the Peace is generally the Mother of new Arts, and Sciences) to fit us for several Advantages proper to the Temper, and Extent of such a *War*, and martial time, when *Arms*, and *Stratagems* take up too much of our hours, to permit us to feed many in the Enquiries into *Truth*, and all sorts of Learning, by the perusal of voluminous Tracts.

Nor did I forget the Difficulties which presented themselves to the Members of the Society, to hinder their engaging in this Affair; first, as to answering all *Queries* well, and to the satisfaction of those that pretend to follow Reason for their Rule, all Sciences being too very disputable; as also from the *Envy*, and *Malice* of others; and lastly, from the different *Humors* of the *Quarrels*. Nor could I pass over the due Praise of the *First* that set it on foot.

In the *second part* I endeavour'd, according to the best of my Knowledge, to represent the *Progress*, *Methods*, and *Performances* of the SOCIETY when establish'd, which if I should have run into the *Vastness* that the Subject requir'd, I must have swell'd my Book into a Volume as big as all they had writ; but designing this as the *Quarrel's Companion*, or *Pocket-book*, I was forc'd not only to omit the abundance of difficult *Texts of Scripture* they have explain'd, and other matters of *Divinity*, but a no less number of *Philosophical Questions*, and only insert'd References to those that are *Medicinal*, *Chirurgical*, and *Mathematical*. &c. thinking this sufficient to direct any one in all his *Queries* to the Society. Nor was it possible in so voluminous a Miscellany to give every Member his due Performance, especially since I confess my *Ignorance* as to that particular; however, the Talents of each were so universal, that if Sickness or absence of a Member happen'd, it was easily supply'd by the Abilities of the rest. I shall only add, that they *jointly assist one another* in all things that require Consultation; and, that they have advanced several things that are *wholly NEW*, and explain'd those Difficulties in a little time, which one would judge the *business of Ages*. In this same part I have a little insinuated upon an imperfect Defence of their Party, though any one that believes, that a Member of this Society was concerned in the search after Wit, will think my Labour ill spent in persuading the world of what it must grant, that they have not a little; but I directed my Discourse to those who were so *abounding* in themselves, that they deny'd it. I have also (as I think every man of Honor ought) undertaken their Defence for answering the *Cadits Quærits*.

In the *third part*, I have in few words given a Prospect of what the World is suddenly to expect from the Learned Pen of our *Athenian*; and likewise what I have reason to hope hereafter. Nor did I forget the Oppositions this Undertaking has met with, with a too favourable account (when I could have done much more) of both the Principles of its Opposers, and the Insults of their *Roadrunners*: In all which, if I can merit Pardon from that *Ingenious Society*, and the more judicious part of the World, I shall think I have attained to no small piece of Happiness, and Success.

LAUS DEO.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since the Conclusion of this History, I have receiv'd these two following Letters, the first of which shews, that my Design is (much as I will) discover'd to a

Member of the *Athenian Society*, and also what I have said in his just Praise; which notwithstanding his modest Letter, I shall never retract, but must only add one thing which I had forgot, and that is, That his Knowledge in *SACRED* Writ does not a little adorn his other Accomplishments, as may be seen in the management of that Controversie against the *Anabaptists*, which I have spoken more fully of in the preceding part of this History. I have adventur'd to transcribe his Letter verbatim for the Press, rather chusing to add to my rudeness in acting without the Licence for it, than in not doing him that Justice which he deserves. 'Tis as follows.

S I R,

I am inform'd, that you have begun to write the History of the *Athenian Society*, and that you have taken a particular notice of my modest first Undertaking, and under the name of a *Mathematician*, the last of which I do hereby disown; as for your other Entomies, and Performances, which (I'm told) you've attributed to me, I can deny nothing of 'em but the *Truth*, and could wish you'd spare your Character till I have better deserv'd it; for I have neither that *Foundness* nor *Vanity* for any thing I've done, to prefer a noise about it to my own *flammarion*, if it had any. Pray pardon me, if I desire you would alter your Character of me, or transfer it to the rest of my Brethren of the *Athenian Society*, who better deserve it: Or if it be too late, by reason of some sheets already printed, that you would a little soften it; or make the best Excuse you can in those that are to come; for I look upon the Applause and Scandal of the Age to be Synonymous words amongst such as are really wise, and the reverse of 'em much more eligible to

Sir, your humble Servant, R. S.

By this Letter indeed will appear the great modesty of this Gentleman; nor is that of the rest of his Brethren less: But tho' Modesty be an excellent Virtue, yet sometimes its Dictates are not to be obeyed; as here, when out of a Self-demeal, and humble Opinion of himself, it would oblige me not to give this Gentleman what is his due, and rob the World of Great Examples, with which it is so ill furnish'd.

The other Letter is from the Gentleman, who gave me an insight into the Affairs of this Society, which I'll add, because it gives a farther light into the Subject of my History; only I must omit the beginning of it, being a Praise of my Performance, which I am absolutely sure I do not at all deserve.

S I R,

and since you have writ that use of the Information you got of me, I wish you had communicated your Design sooner, that I might have given you some other Hints, as necessary as you have had, concerning the more secret Transactions of the *Athenian Society*, as to the order they observe in their Conversation when they meet, tho' of different years; that makes no confusion, tho' upon such different, and difficult Subjects, a Moderator being always choic'd by majority of Votes, to determine any point in Controversie; and 'tis unanimously agreed, that whenever any Member is absent on any occasion, he shall transmit his Papers, for the Approbation, and concurrence of the whole Society, unless in some particular cases: And if any more silent Notion, or refined Thought, is proposed in the Mind of any one of them, 'tis freely imparted to the whole by Word, or Writing, and by them improv'd fit for the public view; they never cousting easy Questions, but always something that may be curious, and diverting; if they affected the contrary, they might satisfy abundance of their impatient Quarrels, tho' some of those that carry an easy Face, are very difficult to resolve; as that about the *Chequer*, *Tyburn*, *Septuagesima*, &c. They never put in any ridiculous Questions themselves, or abuse their Quarrels, or their Objections; but are as willing to learn as to inform others, it being the standing Law of the Society, not to undervalue other ingenious Persons. They allow there are extraordinary men in all Sciences, excelling any in this Society; but there has not been any Book-steller yet so happy as to find so many to answer this great End. By Time, and Exercise they themselves own, they have been inform'd by their Quarrels. When Authors are silent upon any point, or come not up to the Question, the Law is, That no Member shall publish the Solution till he has imparted his Reasons to the Society for their Approbations. I hear they are resolv'd to correct some Answers, as soon as they have leisure; and they have excluded one Member, for making a frequent breach of this Rule, because their design is to leave nothing imperfect, as near as they can.

Yours to command, C. B.

Having received this Letter, I thought necessary to insert it, since the Contents of it were wanting to make this HISTORY complete.

P. M. I. S.

